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Naval War College

# THE BATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

OCTOBER 1944

## STRATEGICAL AND TACTICAL ANALYSIS

VOL I

Preliminary Operations  
until 0719 October 17th.  
including Battle off Formosa

U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
1953

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By

Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN(Ret.)

Head, World War II Battle Evaluation Group

Naval War College

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In preparing this Volume, Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN(Ret.) had as his principal assistants:

Captain Joseph J. Rochefort, USN(Ret.), who translated numerous Japanese documents, assisted in the collection of data on Japanese plans and operations and gave advice thereon.

Commander Paul E. Hartmann, USN, who collected data on both Allied and Japanese air operations with especial reference to land-based air operations, analyzed these operations and provided initial drafts.

Mr. John H. Wilson, who drafted all Diagrams and Plates.

Mr. Clarke H. Kawakami, who translated Japanese documents and reviewed the rough drafts of the Japanese operations.

Mrs. Lily Y. Tanaka, who translated Japanese documents.

Chief Quartermaster Merrill O. Stout, USN, who collected data on Allied submarines, plans and operations.

Chief Yeomen Maurice W. Burton, USN, Charles R. Carlisle, USN, Yeoman Second Class Joseph F. Cavanaugh, USN, Mrs. Mary S. Prasso and Mrs. Alice G. Hallock who provided the basic secretarial work.

Commodore Bates, for his part, checked and evaluated the above data, personally collected all data other than the above, consulted ranking American officers who participated in the battle or in its planning, wrote the manuscript, and prepared all analyses and comments, resulting therefrom.







FOREWORD

This analysis of the preliminary phases, including the Battle off Formosa, of the Battle for Leyte Gulf was prepared by the Naval War College. It is based on information from both Allied and Japanese sources which is wider and more complete than that available to writers on this subject up to this time. It endeavors to maintain at all times, the viewpoint of the commanders of the units involved on both sides.

Complete information from all sources, was not available to this analysis. This was especially true of Japanese Army and Navy land-based aircraft in the Philippines, of Japanese Army aircraft in Formosa, and of Japanese submarine operations and dispositions. It was also true concerning the thought processes which motivated certain of the Japanese senior commanders, notably CinC, Combined Fleet, since few reports of this action by such senior officers have been discovered. All known sources of such information in the United States and in Japan were examined but with only limited success. New facts and circumstances, therefore, may come to light from time to time which may change some of the analyses produced herein.

In view of the critical nature of this analysis an effort has been made in certain important situations to place the critic in the position of the commander in order to obtain the latter's point of view. In employing this system it is realized that although the critic can often succeed in placing himself sufficiently near the position of the commander for any practical purposes, in many instances he may not succeed in doing so.

Because of the nature of the Allied victory at Leyte Gulf and the numerous controversies which have arisen concerning it, as complete a study as possible of the preliminary phases has been provided.

These preliminary phases and, especially the Battle off Formosa, were a real test of the capabilities of Allied carrier-based aircraft versus Japanese land-based aircraft and of the existing Allied and Japanese concepts concerning the employment of these weapons. It was also a test of the combat ability of the various commanders on both sides. The pages of history have invariably revealed defects in command in similar situations, and it would have been surprising had such defects not appeared in these operations.

This battle reaffirmed the lesson so often forgotten - that the test of battle is the only test which proves the combat ability of



commanders. The ability or lack of ability of the various commanders in the art of war became apparent. Valor alone was shown to be insufficient, for valor is not an attribute of only one race, but is an attribute and a heritage of many races. The indispensable qualification for command, the art of war, was shown to be the ability in combat to apply the science of war to active military situations.

The present senior officers of the Navy are well aware of the reasons for changes in established doctrines and in the development of new ones. But this cannot necessarily be said of the commanders of the future, who very probably will be inexperienced in command in war.

Finally, all comments and criticisms are designed to be constructive. By indicating what appear to be sound and unsound decisions, and the apparent reasons for arriving at them, it is hoped to provoke earnest thought among prospective commanders and thus to improve professional judgment in command.



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ALL TIMES IN THIS ANALYSIS, EXCEPT ALLIED DISPATCH TIMES

ARE ZONE TIME (- 9)

ALLIED DISPATCH TIMES ARE GREENWICH CIVIL TIME



PRINCIPAL COMMANDERSALLIED

## (a) Southwest Pacific Area.

Commander Southwest Pacific Area (COMSOWESPAC)	General MacArthur, Douglas A., USA
Chief of Staff	Lt. General Sutherland, Richard K., USA
Commander Allied Air Force SOWESPAC (COMAIRSOWESPAC)	Lt. General Kenney, George C., (AC) USA
Chief of Staff	Brigadier General Beebe, Royden E., (AC), USA
Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC (CANFSOWESPAC)	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Schaeffer, Valentine H., USN
Commander SEVENTH Fleet (COMSEVENTHFLT)	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Schaeffer, Valentine H., USN
Commanding General SIXTH Army	Lt. General Kruger, Walter, USA
Chief of Staff	Brigadier General Decker, George H., USA
Commander Central Philippines Attack Force (CTF 77)	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Schaeffer, Valentine H., USN
Commander Bombardment and Fire Support Group (CTG 77.2)	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Bates, Richard W., USN

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Commander Escort Carrier Group (CTG 77.4)	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Carson, Joseph M., USN
Commander Northern Attack Force (CTF 78)	Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Noble, Albert G., USN
Commander Palo Attack Group (CTG 78.1)	Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Noble, Albert G., USN
Commander San Ricardo Attack Group (CTG 78.2)	Rear Admiral Fechteler, William M., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Sprague, Albert T., Jr., USN
Commander Southern Attack Force (CTF 79)	Vice Admiral Wilkinson, Theodore S., USN
Chief of Staff	Commodore Powell, Paulus P., USN
Commander Attack Group ABLE (CTG 79.1)	Rear Admiral Conolly, Richard L., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Moore, Walter E., USN
Commander Attack Group BAKER (CTG 79.2)	Rear Admiral Royal, Forrest B., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Dugan, Paul F., USN
Commander Submarines SEVENTH Fleet	Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W., USN
Chief of Staff	Captain Nichols, Philip G., USN



Commander Submarines West Australia  
(CTF 71)

Chief of Staff

Rear Admiral Christie,  
Ralph W., USN

Captain Nichols,  
Philip G., USN

(b) Pacific Ocean Areas.

CinC Pacific Ocean Areas (CINCPOA)

Chief of Staff

Admiral Nimitz,  
Chester W., USN

Vice Admiral McMorris  
Charles H., USN

Commander Western Pacific Task Forces

Chief of Staff

Admiral Halsey,  
William F., USN

Rear Admiral Carney,  
Robert B., USN

Commander THIRD Fleet (COMTHIRDFLT)

Chief of Staff

Admiral Halsey,  
William F., USN

Rear Admiral Carney,  
Robert B., USN

Commander FIRST Carrier Task Force (CTF 38)

Chief of Staff

Vice Admiral Mitscher,  
Marc A., USN

Commodore Burke,  
Arleigh A., USN

Commander Forward Area Central Pacific  
Task Force (CTF 57)

Chief of Staff

Vice Admiral Hoover,  
John H., USN

Captain Scull,  
Herbert M., USN

Commander Shore-Based Air Force  
Forward Area (CTF 59)

Chief of Staff

Major General Hale,  
Willis H., (AC), USA

Colonel Carr,  
Lawrence J., (AC), USA

Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet  
(COMSUBPAC) (CTF 17)

Chief of Staff

Vice Admiral Lockwood,  
Charles A., USN

Commodore Comstock,  
Merrill, USN

(c) China-Burma-India Area.

CG Army Forces CBI

General Stilwell,  
Joseph W., USA

Chief of Staff

Brigadier General  
Cannon, Robert M., USA

CG FOURTEENTH Air Force

Major General  
Chennault, Claire L.,  
(AC), USA

Chief of Staff

Brigadier General  
Glenn, Edgar E., USA

CG TWENTIETH Bomber Command

Major General LeMay,  
Curtis E., (AC), USA

Chief of Staff

Brigadier General  
Upston, John E., USA

JAPANESE

Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet

Admiral Toyoda, Soemu,  
IJN

Chief of Staff

Rear Admiral Kusaka,  
Ryunosuke, IJN

Commander Mobile Force

Vice Admiral Ozawa,  
Jisaburo, IJN

Chief of Staff

Rear Admiral Furumura,  
Keizo, IJN

Commander Mobile Force Main Force

Vice Admiral Ozawa,  
Jisaburo, IJN

Chief of Staff

Rear Admiral Furumura,  
Keizo, IJN

Commander FIRST Striking Force

Vice Admiral Kurita,  
Takeo, IJN

Chief of Staff

Rear Admiral Koyanagi,  
Tomiji, IJN



Commander SECOND Striking Force

Vice Admiral Shima,  
Kiyohide, IJN

Chief of Staff

Rear Admiral Matsumoto,  
Takeshi, IJN

Commander Advance Expeditionary Force

Vice Admiral Miwa,  
Shigeyoshi, IJN

Commander Southwest Area Force

Vice Admiral Mikawa,  
Gunichi, IJN

Chief of Staff

Rear Admiral Nishio,  
Hidehiko, IJN

Commander THIRD Southern Expeditionary Fleet  
(Philippines Force)

Vice Admiral Mikawa,  
Gunichi, IJN

Chief of Staff

Rear Admiral Nishio,  
Hidehiko, IJN

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force

Vice Admiral Teraoka,  
Kimpei, IJN

Chief of Staff

Captain Odahara,  
Toshihiko, IJN

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force

Vice Admiral Fukudome,  
Shigeru, IJN

Chief of Staff

Rear Admiral  
Sugimoto, Shie, IJN

CinC Southern Army

Field Marshal  
Terauchi, Hisaichi,  
IJA

CG FOURTH Air Army

Lt. General Tominaga,  
Kyoji, IJA

INTRODUCTION

The Battle for Leyte Gulf is an action of great interest to students of Naval History for several reasons. It was the first occasion in which Japanese and Allied naval and air forces had engaged in a colossal fleet battle, wherein the entire Japanese Navy supported by Army Air Forces in the Philippines and Formosa engaged the major portion of the Allied Naval and Air Forces in the central and south Pacific theaters with both ships and planes; it was fought in a series of more or less independent but nevertheless closely related actions; it embraced the sixteen days between October 10th, when the Allied carrier task forces struck Okinawa, and October 26th, when the Japanese Fleet finally retired, badly defeated, from battle; it highlighted clearly the problems of command arising from coordinated operations between theater commanders as well as between independent commanders wherein one of these theater or independent commanders is in a supporting role to the other; it was an outstanding tactical and strategic victory for the Allies,

This analysis is concerned with the preliminary phases of the battle commencing with the air strikes by Allied carrier task forces (TF 38) against the Nansei Shoto on October 10th and ending with the 0719, October 17th, contact report by Japanese lookouts on Suluan Island on Allied surface forces entering Leyte Gulf. The principal operations during this time were the air strikes by TF 38 against Formosa on October 12th, 13th, and 14th to be known in this analysis as the Battle off Formosa, but known by the Japanese as the Battle of Formosa.

The battle resulted from operations connected with the seizure by the Allies of the Leyte-Western Samar Area of the Philippines and the subsequent efforts by the Japanese to prevent these operations from being successful.

Prior to moving into the Philippines, the original Allied Plan called for the completion (a) by Commander in Chief Pacific Ocean Areas (CINCPOA) of STALEMATE II, which involved the capture of Peleliu, Angaur, Ulithi and Yap,\* and (b) by Commander Southwest Pacific Area (COMSOWESPAC) of INTERLUDE,\*\* which involved the capture of Morotai, and of GOSSIPMONGER,\*\* which involved the capture of Talaud.

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\* CINCPOA Joint Staff Study, STALEMATE II, July 14th, 1944.

\*\* Director of Naval Records and History, Letter to President, Naval War College, December 18th, 1950.



However, before STALEMATE II and INTERLUDE could be effected, Commander THIRD Fleet, (COMTHIRDFLT) in making carrier-based air strikes on Mindanao preliminary to these operations, noted an unexpected weakness of enemy air resistance on that island. This prompted him to make additional air strikes into the central Philippines. These additional air strikes, made on September 12th and 13th, disclosed a similar weakness in air resistance in the central Philippines. As a consequence, at 1200, September 13th, he recommended by dispatch to CINCPAC, that STALEMATE II be cancelled, and that KING II, the capture of Leyte, which had been scheduled for December 20th, be inaugurated immediately.\* CINCPAC, at 1647, replied that Phase I of STALEMATE II, which involved the capture of Peleliu and Angaur, would be carried out as planned, but that consideration was being given to the abandonment of that portion of Phase II which involved the capture of Yap.\*\* CINCPAC also notified COMSOPAC of COMTHIRDFLT's proposals. On September 13th, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised COMSOPAC that they considered the KING II Operation "highly desirable and that it would both advance the progress of the war by many months and simplify arrangements for further operations."\*\*\* At 1000, September 14th, CINCPAC informed COMINCH, who informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff, among other items, that he thought that the capture of Yap was probably no longer necessary and inferred acceptance of an early movement into Leyte.\*\*\*\*

Also on September 14th, COMSOPAC concurred that Yap should be bypassed but stated that more information concerning current air actions was necessary before he could make a final decision.\*\*\*\*\* This message was received in Washington at 0304, Eastern Daylight Time (zone 4) September 14th.

On September 15th, COMSOPAC advised the Joint Chiefs of Staff that, in view of the latest report from COMTHIRDFLT concerning air operations in the Philippines, he (COMSOPAC) was ready to initiate KING II at once with target date of October 20th.\*\*\*\*\* This message was received in Washington at 2128, Eastern Daylight Time, September 14th.

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 130300, September 1944, to CINCPAC info COMSOPAC and COMINCH.

\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 130747, September 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT info COMSOPAC and COMINCH.

\*\*\* Joint Chiefs of Staff Dispatch No. 24, September 13th, 1944, to COMSOPAC.

\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 140101, September 1944 to COMINCH.

\*\*\*\*\* COMSOPAC Dispatch CX17697, September 14th, 1944 to Joint Chiefs of Staff.

\*\*\*\*\* COMSOPAC Dispatch No. C17744, September 1944 to Joint Chiefs of Staff.



On September 15th, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were at Quebec attending the Octagon Conference, approved and advanced KING II, from December 20th to October 20th.\* This message was received in Washington at 2327, Eastern Daylight Time, September 14th.

The landings, therefore, on Peleliu and Morotai, took place on September 15th as scheduled, and the operation for the capture of Angaur, followed on September 17th. Meanwhile, COMTHIRDFLT decided to go ahead with the seizure of Ulithi, which, while included in Phase II of STALEMATE II, was apparently but lightly defended. All of the above operations were highly successful. Morotai fell on September 15th with negligible resistance, Angaur, on September 20th and Ulithi, on September 23rd with no resistance whatsoever, and Peleliu, on October 13th after a very bloody and costly operation.

Up to this time the Japanese had been steadily defeated by Allied forces, both in the west central Pacific and in the southwestern Pacific, with the consequent loss of vital strategic areas. With their great defeat in June in the First Battle of the Philippine Sea, and with the ensuing loss of the Marianas they had finally realized that the time had come to take a firm stand. They had therefore planned a series of defensive operations, known as the "SHO" (Victory) operations, which were designed to deny to the Allies a foothold in the "last ditch" island chain bastion of the Japanese Empire. This bastion extended from the Empire through the Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippines and, on occasions, included the Bonin Islands. The Japanese clearly perceived that should this bastion be broken at any important place, such as the Philippines, industrial Japan and the resources of the southern areas would be forever separated. They divided this major area into four specific areas and prepared plans which prescribed the action to be taken should the Allies attempt landing operations within any of these lesser areas. These four areas were (a) the Philippines (termed SHO One), (b) the Formosa, Nansei Shoto, southern Kyushu area (termed SHO Two), (c) the Kyushu, Shikoku and Honshu area, which on occasion embraced areas around the Bonins (termed SHO Three), and the Hokkaido area (termed SHO Four). These plans which were quite complete, provided for "holding this line right where it was by committing all of the Navy and as much of the Army and air strength as could be made available into a finish fight."\*\* Each plan was to be an all-out effort.

With the commencement of the Allied air strikes against the Nansei Shoto, Formosa and northern Luzon, the Japanese did not activate the SHO operations. Instead, as will be discussed later, they activated the base air forces only and endeavored to defeat the Allied carrier force by land-based air power alone. These countermeasures culminated in the Battle off Formosa.

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\* Joint Chiefs of Staff Dispatch Octagon 31A to COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC.

\*\* Campaigns of the Pacific War, USSBS Naval Analysis Division, 1946, page 281.



A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE PRELIMINARY PHASES OF THE BATTLE FOR  
LEYTE GULF INCLUDING THE BATTLE OFF FORMOSA

The directive of the Joint Chief of Staff to COMSOWESPAC and CINCPQA on September 15th put into effect the Allied plan for the capture of Leyte commencing on October 20th. This plan required that large amphibious forces be assembled in Manus, Admiralty Islands, and Hollandia, New Guinea, under COMSOWESPAC, and strong carrier forces in the Western Pacific largely based at Ulithi, Manus and Saipan, under CINCPQA. These forces were to be supported by (a) powerful land-based air forces operating from the recently captured Marianas, Palau, Morotai, Biak, northern Solomons, and from bases located at Darwin, Australia, in China, and in certain of the Netherlands Indies, (b) powerful submarine forces operating along the Japanese line of communications from Japan to the Netherlands Indies.

Although the Allies had planned their operations with secrecy, the Japanese, through their knowledge of Allied operations and through certain intelligence information, had formed a fairly accurate opinion as to when the Allies would move into the southern Philippines. They had not only established this time as during or after the last ten days in October, but, in addition, had forecast that such landing operations would be preceded by vast carrier-based air strikes to destroy the Japanese air strength in southern Kyushu, Nansei Shoto, Formosa, and the Philippines.

The Japanese planned to defeat the Allied operations by the employment of (a) land-based air power, (b) a powerful surface force (FIRST Striking Force) operating out of Lingga-Singapore, (c) a carrier task force (Main Force) and a light surface force (SECOND Striking Force), both operating out of the Inland sea, and (d) by submarine forces operating in the objective area.

The Allied plan became effective, insofar as the Japanese were concerned, October 10th, for, on that date, TF 38, consisting of four task groups (TG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, and 38.4) struck Okinawa. The Japanese had expected an attack by carrier-based planes in this area at this time and had not only alerted the area to this possibility but had retired their principal air attack force--the "T" Force--from southern Kyushu to more secure bases in order to protect it from the impending attack. Despite the fact that American air attacks were expected, this attack found the Japanese CinC, Combined Fleet at Shinchiku, Formosa, instead of at his headquarters near Tokyo.

(1) Operations on October 10th at Nansei Shoto.

The American attack consisted primarily of four large successive air strikes preceded by a fighter sweep and supported by



several small searches. A total of 1396 sorties were made for all purposes.

This attack caused considerable destruction to Japanese planes, facilities and shipping. The Japanese admitted losing thirty-six naval planes, including five search planes, on Okinawa alone, and also admitted losing all army planes in the objective area. The Americans, on the other hand, lost twenty-one planes from all causes.

As a result of this attack on Okinawa, the Japanese alerted SHO One and SHO Two for the Base Air Forces only, and ordered (a) all operational planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR to prepare for land-based operations, (b) the SECOND Striking Force to prepare to sortie, and (c) the SIXTH Base Air Force to destroy the enemy.

As a result of numerous searches, the Japanese succeeded on this date in making contact at 1533 on one three-carrier task group, and at 1540 on one two-carrier task group, which groups were roughly forty miles apart. The Japanese were unable to exploit these contacts.

While TF 38 was making the above strikes, the first unit of the Allied amphibious forces, the minesweeping group, departed Manus for Leyte.

During this time the Allied submarines sank several merchant ships. The Japanese submarines were generally in port and the few at sea made no contacts.

## (2) Operations on October 11th against Aparri, Luzon.

COMTHIRDFLT on this date fueled TF 38 and launched one search of eight planes and an afternoon air attack of sixty-one planes against Aparri. The attack on Aparri, which gained surprise, was successful, destroying by American claims, since Japanese reports are not available, fifteen Japanese planes and damaging facilities. The Americans lost seven planes, of which six were operational losses. The search was negative.

While TF 38 was accomplishing the above, Tractor Groups ABLE and BAKER of the Southern Attack Force of the amphibious forces departed Manus for Leyte.

During this day the Japanese received a number of reports locating the task groups of TF 38 with reasonable accuracy. Since these locations were generally in the direction of the Philippines, the Japanese cancelled the sortie alert for the SECOND Striking Force, and ordered certain submarines to sea to attack TF 38 off Formosa. The first submarine did not depart on this mission until two days later.

The Allied submarines, on this date, made several contacts on convoys and sank several merchant ships. The Japanese submarines were generally in port and the few at sea made no contacts.



(3) Operations on October 12th, 13th and 14th (Battle off Formosa).

(a) Operations on October 12th.

COMTHIRDFLT on this day commenced his operations against Formosa. The American attack, as on October 10th, consisted primarily of four large successive air strikes preceded by a fighter sweep and supported by several small air searches. A total of 1378 sorties were made for all purposes.

This attack did not effect surprise, since the Japanese had been alerted. The American pilots met determined air opposition but achieved very successful results. They lost in this attack forty-eight planes from all causes.

As a consequence of this attack, the Japanese activated SHO One and SHO Two for the Base Air Forces only. This was a serious deviation from the SHO plans for the Combined Fleet, which plans called for the retirement of the principal air forces from the objective area during the earlier phases of carrier attacks so that they would be available for the simultaneous all-out attack of all forces. Such simultaneous employment of all forces both surface and air, including land and carrier-based aircraft, was to be used only against an Allied landing at the time of landing.

In addition to this, the Japanese placed the operational aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR and the entire fighter strength of the China Air Fleet under the operational command of their Base Air Force Commander in Formosa. They also attacked TF 38 with their "T" Force (101 attack planes) and claimed ten ships set afire, of which four (carriers) sank. The Japanese lost in this attack some forty-two planes. However, they believed, because of these claims, that their land-based aircraft was effective against TF 38. Actually, no ship of TF 38 received any damage whatsoever.

Allied submarines made some merchant ship contacts and torpedoed one destroyer. Japanese submarines at sea made no important contacts.

During this day the San Ricardo Attack Group of the Northern Attack Force departed Manus for Leyte and the Dinagat Attack Group departed Hollandia for Leyte.

(b) Operations on October 13th.

COMTHIRDFLT successfully attacked Formosa in a manner similar to that of the preceding day excepting that he launched three, rather than four, successive air strikes, supported by several limited air searches. A total of 974 sorties were made.

TF 38 lost twelve planes in these attacks.



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During the day the Japanese transferred the operational aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR to Formosa. This practically insured that these planes would not be returned to the carriers.

Also during the day the Japanese High Command evaluated the preceding day's attack on TF 38 by the "T" Force as "two enemy ships sunk; two moderately damaged." This was well below the original estimate.

The Japanese made numerous contacts on the task groups of TF 38 throughout the day. During the day they launched a 170-plane attack group composed of both Army and Navy planes from the Philippines to attack the American task force, but the attack was not made. At evening twilight the "T" Force (forty-three planes) attacked TG's 38.1 and 38.4 and claimed having sunk three carriers, one battleship, one cruiser, and having damaged two carriers. The Japanese High Command evaluated this attack as "six ships sunk or set afire." Actually they had torpedoed the CANBERRA and had inflicted slight damage to the FRANKLIN. The Japanese admitted losing in this attack, from various causes, twenty out of the forty-three planes. Because of the reported success of this attack and because of the American attacks on Formosa, the Japanese decided to launch a general air offensive on the following day against TF 38. Meanwhile, COMTHIRDFLT decided to save the CANBERRA, formed a protective group, the CANBERRA Group, to escort it to safety, and covered it with three task groups. He ordered the fourth task group, TG 38.4 to attack northern Luzon.

During the day the Palo Attack Group, the Harbor Entrance Patrol Group, and certain units of the Panason Attack Group, all of the Northern Attack Force, plus the Close Covering Group of the Philippines Attack Force, departed Hollandia for Leyte.

The Allied submarines contacted a number of merchant ships and sank several. Japanese submarines at sea made no important contacts. One submarine departed Inland Sea for operations against TF 38.

(c) Operations on October 14th.

On this day COMTHIRDFLT attacked Formosa with three out of four task groups but made only one strike. This strike, consisting of 248 planes, was designed to reduce the possibility of effective air attack against the CANBERRA Group which he had designated as TG 30.3. At this same time the Luzon task group, TG 38.4, attacked Aparri with twenty-four planes. A similar attack against Laoag failed because of bad weather.

Upon completion of the strike on Formosa, TG's 38.2 and 38.3 retired towards their fueling rendezvous. TG 38.1 remained to cover TG 30.3.

During and because of the attack, TF 38 lost (a) on Formosa, twenty-three planes, and (b) on Aparri, six planes.

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Meanwhile Formosa was attacked about midday by 109 B-29's of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command operating from China. These B-29's did considerable damage in the Takao area losing two planes operationally.

The Japanese maintained contact on TF 38 throughout the day. Commencing in the late forenoon, planes to assist in the general attack commenced departing their bases. In addition the SECOND Striking Force was ordered to sea to destroy enemy ships which might be crippled by the general attack. Including the reconnaissance planes a total of 360 planes were launched by the Japanese for a daylight attack against TF 38.

Some of these planes, in poor weather, attacked TG's 38.2 and 38.3 inflicting slight damage on HANCOCK. However, many units failed to make contact.

An additional fifty-two planes of the "T" Force were launched for a dusk attack. These planes struck TG 38.1 as scheduled and claimed sinking one large carrier, one small carrier, one escort carrier, one battleship, one heavy cruiser. Most claims were made by Army pilots. Actually the only damage done was the torpedoing of the HOUSTON. COMTHIRDFLT decided to save the HOUSTON, and formed a protective group, the HOUSTON Group, to escort it to safety.

The Japanese, in a revised estimate of damage inflicted by "T" Force on October 12th and 13th, claimed having sunk (a) October 12th, six to eight carriers, and (b) October 13th, three to five carriers. This was a total of from nine to thirteen carriers.

During this day Attack Groups ABLE and BAKER of TF 79 departed Manus for Leyte.

The Allied submarines on this date made a number of contacts on merchant shipping and sank several ships. Japanese submarines at sea made no important contacts.

(d) Summary:

CTF 38 believed that he had destroyed in the Battle off Formosa 655 Japanese planes in the air, on the ground or in the water. Japanese data indicates a probability that they lost 492 planes, including 100 Army planes of all types. In addition there was heavy damage to shipping and aircraft facilities but records available as to the nature and magnitude of this damage provide meager information.

(4) Operations on October 15th.

The Japanese on this date commenced a series of broadcasts wherein they claimed the destruction of virtually all of the THIRD Fleet.

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At this same time COMTHIRDFLT received word that the Japanese believed TF 38 to be retiring because of their air attacks and had ordered carriers and surface vessels operating in cooperation with the base air forces to destroy the enemy. COMTHIRDFLT decided to comply with his basic instructions to "destroy major portion of the enemy fleet" and, employing TG 30.3 as a lure, endeavored to obtain a fleet action. At the same time he advised COMSOWESPAC that no fast carriers would be available to support KING II until further notice. He ordered TG's 38.2 and 38.3 to complete fueling and then to assume a covering position over the retiring forces and to launch searches on the following morning.

Meanwhile COMSEVENTHFLT decided to proceed with KING II, CINCPAC redispersed his submarines to provide reconnaissance, and CTG 30.3 closed the HOUSTON Group and merged with it making it a composite TG 30.3.

On this day CTG 38.4 attacked Luzon (Manila area) and claimed having destroyed forty-four planes. The Japanese counter-attacked and thought that in two attacks they had sunk one carrier, set afire two carriers, and hit one battleship and one cruiser. Actually, the only damage they had done was to damage slightly the FRANKLIN. In making these attacks, the Japanese lost an additional fifty-six planes.

The American submarine BESUGO on this date made contact at 0746 on what she reported later as three heavy cruisers, one light cruiser (it was actually two heavy cruisers and four destroyers) passing through Bungo Suido, and at 1107 on one heavy cruiser and one destroyer (actually three destroyers) also passing through Bungo Suido. These two contacts composed the SECOND Striking Force. The Commanding Officer BESUGO, owing to the fact that it was necessary to remain submerged, did not make any contact reports until 1914. The Japanese submarines at sea made no important contacts. Three of them departed this date from the Inland Sea for operations against TF 38.

The Japanese made a number of vital contacts on Allied task forces throughout the day which, when evaluated with the results of the attacks by Philippine planes on TG 38.4, showed that there were two carriers off Formosa and more than six off Luzon, or a total of at least eight carriers.

Also on this day the Japanese learned, quite incorrectly, through reconnaissance that there were four carriers, three battleships, four cruisers, thirteen destroyers, and twenty transports anchored in Admiralty Islands. This reassured them as to the prospects of an immediate landing even though eight carriers had been observed off Formosa-Luzon.

During this day the Fleet Flagship Unit departed Hollandia for Leyte.

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(5) Operations on October 16th.

COMTHIRDFLT continued preparations for fleet action. TG's 38.2 and 38.3 had arrived at their morning rendezvous at Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E and had launched morning air searches from the BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK and ESSEX. At about noon, since the morning searches were negative, COMTHIRDFLT decided that the possibility of fleet action requiring all task groups of TF 38 was remote. He therefore issued instructions to certain of the carrier task groups directing them to carry out operations against the Philippines. However, during the afternoon his air searches contacted at 1825 the SECOND Striking Force (two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and seven destroyers) which they reported as two battleships, one light cruiser and seven destroyers.

COMTHIRDFLT received this report in such a garbled form that he lost one hour and thirty-five minutes in clarifying it. This saved the SECOND Striking Force from air attack.

Meanwhile COMTHIRDFLT directed TG 38.1 to proceed to support TG 38.2 and 38.3, but later cancelled these orders and directed TG 38.1, who had fueled, to proceed to Latitude 21°-00'N, Longitude 127°-00'E where he was to launch a search to the west and northwest the following morning. He also directed the INDEPENDENCE to launch night air searches to the northward to pick up the enemy, but the search was ineffective.

His fourth task group, TG 38.4, fueled and received replacement aircraft and pilots and then headed for a strike position off central Luzon for the following morning.

TG 30.3 continued on towards Ulithi.

On the morning of this day the Japanese CinC, Combined Fleet learned that there were not less than twelve carriers in the Formosa-Luzon area, of which six were off Formosa and six off Luzon. In view of this unsatisfactory situation he shifted his headquarters from Shinchiku to Takao. At Takao he received other contact reports which showed thirteen rather than twelve carriers. This indicated that the base air forces had failed in their efforts to destroy the American carrier force. However, despite this, the Japanese ordered the FIRST Striking Force to prepare for sortie from Lingga for possible action against TF 38.

Meanwhile the Japanese launched a seventy-plane dusk attack against TG 30.3, of which twenty-seven planes were reported shot down. This attack torpedoed the HOUSTON for the second time.

During the early evening Japanese Imperial Headquarters advised, in a grossly exaggerated report, that the Japanese forces were continuing to pursue the fleeing enemy task force, that they had sunk eleven carriers, two battleships, three cruisers and one destroyer and

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had damaged six carriers, two battleships, four cruisers and twelve ships of undetermined type.

During the day fifty-nine B-29's of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command operating from China attacked southwestern Formosa, doing considerable damage.

Also during this day the Cruiser Unit of the Flagship Group, and Reinforcement Group ONE departed Hollandia separately for Leyte.

The Allied submarines made a number of contacts on small enemy units such as destroyers. The BESUGO damaged the SUZUTSUKI with torpedoes. Japanese submarines at sea made no important contacts.

(6) Operations until 0719 October 17th.

During the early morning of the 17th, and until 0719, the Japanese were engaged primarily in reorganizing their shattered air forces and in endeavoring, by night searches, to regain contact on TF 38. However, their searches were all negative, which may have convinced them that TF 38 was in fact retiring. Actually, the searches were poor and failed to discover the three task groups (TG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.3) which were in the area searched.

Meanwhile, COMTHIRDFLT, in view of the fact that his intelligence indicated that there was little probability of a fleet action since only limited forces had been observed and these were without carriers, decided to go ahead with his covering responsibilities for KING II and commenced preparing directives in accordance with this decision.

At this same time, SEVENTH Fleet naval forces were approaching the entrance to Leyte Gulf. At 0719, October 17th, the Dinagat Attack Group, the Minesweeping Group and the Escort Carrier Group were in position to seize Suluan Island.

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CHAPTER ISTRATEGIC AREA\*(a) GENERAL DISCUSSION

The strategic area involved in both the combat and support operations for the capture of the Island of Leyte, Philippine Islands extended roughly from the Inland Sea in Japan southward to northern Australia and from the Marianas, Palau, and Admiralty Islands westward to the eastern shores of the Asiatic continent.

The strategic area involved in the actual combat operations generally embraced the Philippine Islands, the water surrounding them, the two east-west water routes through them and the air space over the islands and the waters contiguous thereto.

The Philippine Islands consist of some 7000 islands stretching approximately 1150 miles north and south and some 680 miles east and west. They lie as a barrier between the east coast of Asia and the Pacific. The northernmost tip of Luzon is less than 200 miles from Formosa while the southern coast of Mindanao is forty-three miles north of the Island of Kawio, Netherlands East Indies. The northern coast of Luzon is only 405 miles from Hong Kong.

The absolute necessity of controlling this area and the sea areas to the westward was apparent to the Japanese before the start of the war, for it was clear to them that whoever controlled the Philippines controlled those areas of the South China Sea within range of Philippine-based fighter aircraft. A prime reason for the war, from the Japanese viewpoint, was the necessity for improving the Japanese economy by obtaining the vast natural resources of Southeast Asia, called the Southern Resources Area. This had necessitated not only the seizure of the Netherlands East Indies, Malaya and Burma, which were the principal sources of vital strategic materials, but also the keeping open of the sea lanes from these areas to the homeland itself. These two requirements had necessitated the capture of the Philippines also.\*\*

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\* A considerable portion of the information contained in this chapter was obtained from United States Coast Pilot, Philippine Islands, Parts I and II, Third Edition 1939; from Naval War College Strategic Area Study of Southeast Asia, August 1st, 1950.

\*\* The Campaigns of the Pacific War, USSBS Naval Analysis Division, 1946, page 3; also Summary Report (Pacific War) USSBS, July 1st 1946, pages 1 and 2.



If this was so at the commencement of the war, how much more was it so in October 1944? At this time, the Japanese were in serious straits. Owing to the operations of Allied submarines and of Allied carrier and shore-based aircraft, these sea lanes were becoming less and less secure. This had affected both the Japanese economy and the Japanese military machine with a creeping paralysis. The Japanese realized that should the Philippine-Formosa-Nansei Shoto line be pierced, these lines of communication would be completely severed.\*

Shortage of oil alone had already had a serious effect on the division of Japanese naval forces at a most inopportune time. Owing to the fact that the Japanese oil stocks in the Empire were very low, it had become necessary to base the principal units of the Combined Fleet at Lingga Anchorage, Netherlands East Indies, where there was an abundance of oil. However, this could not be done with the Japanese carrier forces at this time because there was a shortage of trained carrier pilots and of replacement aircraft. Until these pilots had completed their training and the replacement aircraft could be obtained, the carrier force would have to remain in the Empire. CinC, Combined Fleet was therefore forced to divide his fleet so that the carrier forces remained in the Inland Sea while the heavy surface forces based at Lingga.\* As a consequence, these two principal forces were at the time of the Battle for Leyte Gulf, roughly 2500 miles apart.

Therefore, in order that the lines of communication might be held open, it became vitally necessary for the Japanese to continue to hold the strategic area of the Philippines.

To the Allies, the capture of the Philippines would be an important step in the conquest of Japan. Here the two prongs of the Central Pacific forces and the Southwest Pacific forces would come together to provide a base suitable to support later operations either against the China coast, or directly toward Japan itself. The Allies realized that possession of the Philippines would not only completely cut off Japan from her southern sources of material, but would isolate the remaining Japanese garrisons in Southeast Asia. They further realized that re-occupation of the islands by American forces was necessary if the pledge of independence made to the Filipinos prior to the war was to be observed.

It should be clear then that, as the holding of the Philippines was of the utmost importance to the Japanese, and as its seizure by the Allies was part of the Allied strategic plan, the strategic area of the Philippines was destined to become one of the major battle areas of the war.

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\* The Campaigns of the Pacific War, USSBS, July 1st 1946, Chapter XII, page 280.



The location of the principal Japanese and Allied naval and air forces relative to Suluan Island at the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf was, in air miles, as follows:

Peleliu Island, Palau Islands (A)	555
Manus Island, Admiralty Islands (A)	1490
Hollandia, New Guinea (A)	1200
Formosa (J)	750
Ulithi Islands (A)	825
Biak Island, Netherlands East Indies (A)	920
Morotai Island, Netherlands East Indies (A)	520
Lingga Anchorage, Netherlands East Indies (J)	1430
Bungo Suido (NE of Kyushu) Japan (J)	1375
Manila, Luzon Island, Philippine Islands (J)	375
Darwin, Australia (A)	1410
Saipan, Marianas Islands (A)	1200

- (A) American
- (J) Japanese

(b) LEYTE GULF

Leyte Gulf is bounded on the west by Leyte Island; on the north by Samar Island and on the south by the northern tip of Dinagat Island and the northern entrance to Surigao Strait. It is roughly a square forty miles on a side and is of moderate depth ranging from fifty to seventy fathoms at its center. To the north and west, its ten fathom curve is within one to three miles of the beach.

To the northwest from the Gulf are San Pedro Bay and San Juanico Strait, which separate Leyte from Samar. The Bay, which is actually a portion of Leyte Gulf is about eleven miles across at its entrance, is shallow and encumbered by many islets, reefs and shoals. The Strait, which connects the Bay with the Samar Sea north of Leyte, is about twelve miles in length and one-quarter to one-half miles in width, narrowing in two places to 200 yards. It varies in depth averaging between five and fifteen fathoms. Due to its width and its shoals, it can accommodate only minor vessels and small craft.

There are two channels into the Gulf from the Pacific. The north-east channel between Samar Island and Homonhon Island is nine miles wide with depths of at least nine fathoms. Rip-tides and overfalls are present. The southeast channel, also known as Surigao Strait East, which is the preferable channel, is fifteen miles wide with depths generally of twenty fathoms or more.



(c) PASSAGES THROUGH THE PHILIPPINES

The two principal passes from the South China Sea into the Pacific Ocean through the Philippines are: (1) Northern Route and (2) Southern Route. Both of these routes are suitable for large ships, although each has areas of restricted waters too narrow to permit passage of formations other than column.

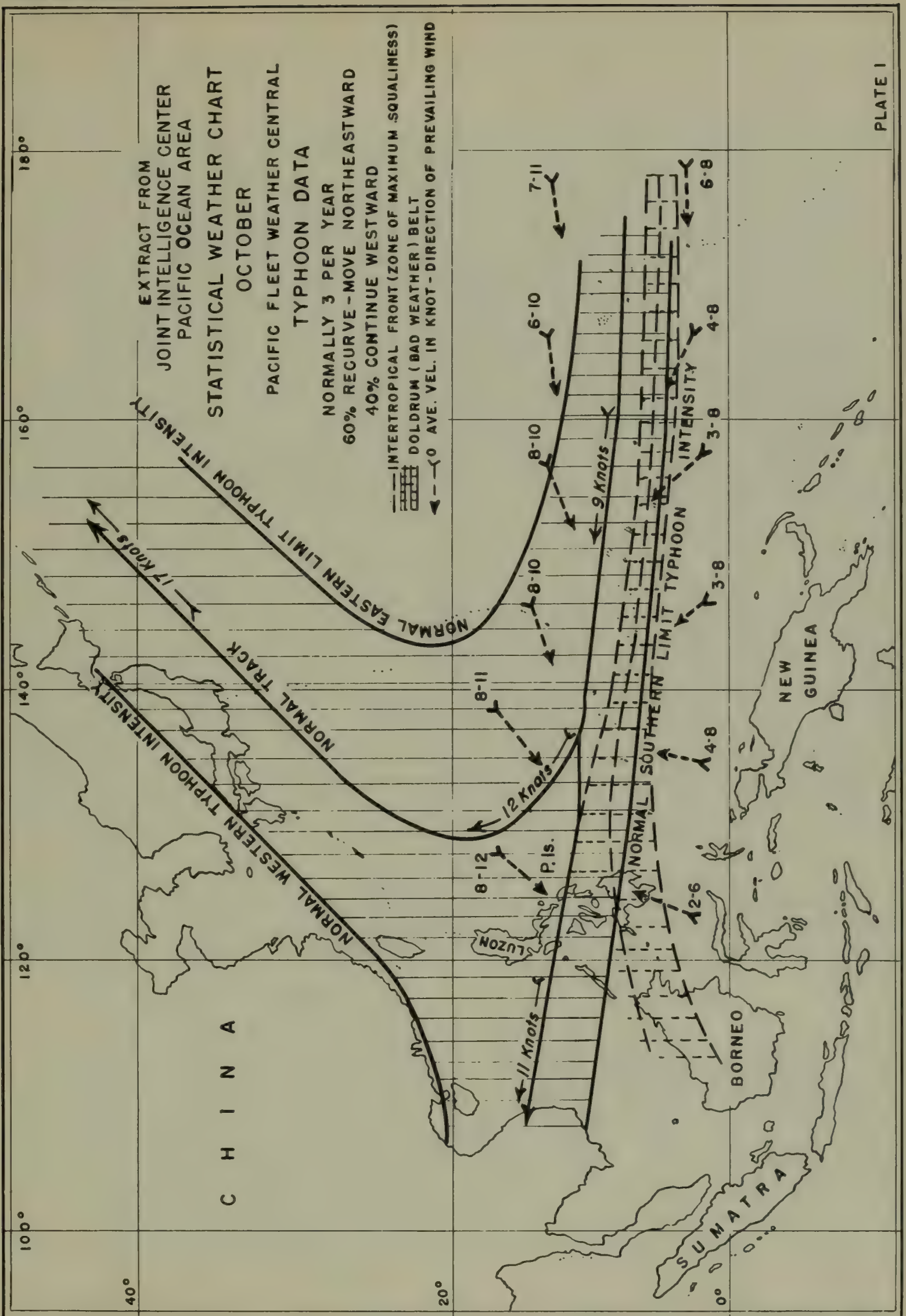
(1) Northern Route

Ships using this route generally enter the Sibuyan Sea either north or south of Mindoro. Entering north of Mindoro the route passes through Verde Island Passage and south of Marinduque Island. Entering south of Mindoro, the route transits Tablas Strait. After passing through the Sibuyan Sea the route passes between Masbate and Burias where the Pass (Masbate Pass) has a minimum width of seven miles; thence north of Ticao, and through Ticao Pass into the southern entrance of San Bernardino Strait. The southern entrance of this strait is the most restricted area on the route. This is because the strait entrance has three channels; one between Luzon and Capul Island; one between Capul Island and Dalupiri Island and one between Dalupiri Island and Samar. The usual pass is between Luzon and Capul Island. Waters in the strait, as elsewhere along the route, are deep but during the northeast monsoon, usually beginning in October, heavy seas and rip-tides are encountered.

(2) Southern Route

In traversing the southern route, vessels may enter the Sulu Sea either north or south of Palawan. In the south the principal channel is through Balabac Strait passing just south of Balabac Island thence through Nasubata Channel into the Sulu Sea. In the north the principal channel is through Mindoro Strait which is divided into two wide passes; through Apo East or West Pass and into the Sulu Sea. Thence, the route enters the Mindanao Sea through a fifteen mile opening south of Negros Island and passes eastward through that sea to the south entrance of Surigao Strait. This entrance is the narrowest part of the strait, being nine miles from the southeast coast of Panaon Island to the nearest tip of Mindanao. The Strait runs approximately thirty-five miles north to Hibuson Island which divides the north entrance into Leyte Gulf into two passes. The pass between Leyte and Hibuson Island is about twelve miles in width; that between Hibuson and Dinagat is three miles. Surigao Strait is deep with the shores on either side steep-to. During the period of the northeast monsoon, winds in the strait may be strong, but usually cease during the night. With such a wind, rain is frequent. In general there is no very bad weather in Surigao Strait. The characteristics of this strait will be discussed more fully during the study of the Battle of Surigao Strait.





EXTRACT FROM  
 JOINT INTELLIGENCE CENTER  
 PACIFIC OCEAN AREA  
 STATISTICAL WEATHER CHART  
 OCTOBER  
 PACIFIC FLEET WEATHER CENTRAL  
 TYPHOON DATA  
 NORMALLY 3 PER YEAR  
 60% RECURVE - MOVE NORTHEASTWARD  
 40% CONTINUE WESTWARD  
 INTERTROPICAL FRONT (ZONE OF MAXIMUM SQUALLINESS)  
 DOLDRUM (BAD WEATHER) BELT  
 0 AVE. VEL. IN KNOT - DIRECTION OF PREVAILING WIND





(d) WEATHER

Weather in the Philippine area is predominantly maritime in character and primarily affected by three different air currents. During the months of March, April and often February and May, the trade wind carries a moderate breeze from the east. This is associated with generally fair weather and clear skies although thunderstorms are frequent. For six months, from May to October, the trade wind is displaced by the southwest monsoon which is a deflection of the southern hemisphere trade winds. This is the season of cloudy weather and rain, although most of the rain is dissipated on the west side of the Philippines and relatively little reaches the east coast. It is also the season for typhoons. During October the southwest monsoon gives way to the stronger and more constant northeast monsoon which prevails from November until early March. This wind brings cooler temperatures, the annual minimum ranging from 61°F to 68°F. It also brings rain to the east coast with maximum rainfall at Leyte and Samar occurring during November - March. The transition period between the two monsoons is of about two weeks duration.

## (1) Typhoons

A weather element having significant influence in the Philippine area is the occurrence of typhoons. Although they may be encountered throughout the year, most of these storms appear during the period of the southwest monsoon from May to November, with September being the month of most frequent typhoons followed by October and November. Winds can attain a velocity of 70-150 knots, and these storms are accompanied by violent seas, heavy rain and very heavy surf. In October, as many as three pass over the Philippines while in November as many as two may do so. Frequently, such storms forming either in the China Sea or in the western Pacific may recurve so as to pass clear of the islands, but their effect in high winds and surf can seriously interfere with operations.

Since practically all typhoons which affect Philippine weather move toward the islands from the southeast, shipping moving from western Pacific bases should have warning of the existence of a typhoon approaching the Philippines in sufficient time to modify plans as necessary.

## (2) Weather In October

The month of October is one of variable weather on the east coast of the Philippines. Until the northeast monsoon develops, the equatorial front, lying across Mindanao, will produce cloudy overcast skies with frequent showers and poor visibility. As this front is moved southward by the strengthening of the northwest monsoon, weather will be partly cloudy with scattered showers and good visibility. During the latter part of the period, the rainy season may commence on the east coast, brought on by the moist air of the northeast monsoon. About twenty days with rain are usual in the Leyte area, causing an average

of nine inches of rainfall during the month. There are almost no clear days in the Leyte area during October; about twenty being cloudy and only eight partly cloudy. In general, visibility is good. (See Plate I)

(3) Winds In October

Except during the typhoon or storm conditions, winds along the east coast in October are light and variable. Sea and land breezes prevail with frequent early morning calms. Operations from small carriers are difficult at times due to lack of wind. The most probable wind is northeasterly.



CHAPTER II\*ALLIED ARRANGEMENTS(a) ALLIED COMMAND RELATIONS (PLATE II)

## (1) General Discussion

The entire Pacific area had been designated as an area of U.S. strategic responsibility. This area had been divided into three large areas: The Southwest Pacific, the Southeast Pacific and the Pacific Ocean; the latter being further subdivided into the North, Central and South Pacific areas.\*\*

The boundary between the Southwest Pacific area and the Pacific Ocean area was the same as it had been when originally established in 1942 with the exception that the modification made in July, 1942 in connection with the seizure of Guadalcanal still remained. The original boundary ran from Cape Kami (Luichow Peninsula) south to Latitude 20°-00'N; thence east to Longitude 130°-00'E; thence south to the Equator; thence east to Longitude 165°-00'E; south to Latitude 10°-00'S; south-westerly to Latitude 17°-00'S, Longitude 160°-00'E; thence south. The Guadalcanal modification changed the boundary 165°-00'E to 159°-00'E.\*\*\*

## (a) Pacific Ocean Area (POA)

The Pacific Ocean area was under the command of a Commander-in-Chief, CINCPAC, who had been assigned basic tasks on April 3rd, 1942 as follows:\*\*

(1) Hold the island positions between United States and Southwest Pacific area necessary for security of line of communications between these regions and for supporting naval, air and amphibious operations against Japanese forces.

(2) Support operations of forces in Southwest Pacific area.

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\* The time of receipt of many Allied dispatches has been generally unavailable to this analysis. Often the time of receipt is known for one command but is not known for other commands. In order to compensate for this, it has been assumed from an average time of receipt of a number of important dispatches that, unless otherwise stated, important dispatches concerning operations were received by action addressees in one half hour. Such assumed times of receipt are indicated by the phrase "at about." While this assumption may seem somewhat generous, a study of this analysis will show that the result of later receipt (such as one hour or more) would have caused little or no change in the basic study.

\*\* SECNAV Letter (SC) A16-3(28), April 20th, 1942, Enclosure (B).

\*\*\* SECNAV Letter (SC) A16-3(28), April 20th, 1942, Annex to Enclosure (A), as modified by SECNAV Letter, Serial 029100A, July 1942.



- (3) Contain Japanese forces within the Pacific Theater.
- (4) Support the defense of the continent of North America.
- (5) Protect essential sea and air communications.

(6) Prepare for execution of major amphibious offensives against positions held by Japan initially to be launched from South Pacific and Southwest Pacific areas.

In connection with the above, he was ordered to exercise direct command of the combined armed forces in the North and Central Pacific areas.\* The Battle for Leyte Gulf was fought almost entirely in the Southwest Pacific area in a position due west of the Central Pacific area. Pacific Ocean Area forces engaged in the battle entered the Southwest Pacific area from the Central Pacific in accordance with coordination agreements between COMSOWESPAC and CINCPAC. These Central Pacific forces remained under the direct command of CINCPAC.

CINCPAC was Admiral Chester W. Nimitz who on May 8th, 1942 had assumed command of all land, sea and air forces in the Pacific Ocean Area except the land defenses of New Zealand.\*\* His headquarters were at Pearl Harbor.

(b) Southwest Pacific Area (SOWESPAC)

The Southwest Pacific area was under the command of a Supreme Commander, COMSOWESPAC, who had on April 3rd, 1942 - in the same dispatch which had assigned tasks to CINCPAC - been assigned basic tasks as follows:\*

(1) Hold the key military regions of Australia as bases for future offensive action against Japan and in order to check Japanese conquest in his area.

(2) Check enemy advance toward Australia and its essential lines of communication by destruction of enemy combatant troops and supply ships, aircraft and bases in Eastern Malaysia and New Guinea, Bismarck, Solomons Islands region.

(3) Exert economic pressure on enemy by destruction of shipping transporting materials to Japan.

(4) Maintain our position in the Philippines.

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\* COMINCH Dispatch 031905, April, 1942, to CINCPAC.

\*\* War Diary CINCPAC, May 1942.



(5) Protect communications within Southwest Pacific area and its close approaches.

(6) Route shipping in that area.

(7) Support operations of friendly forces in Pacific Ocean area and Indian theater.

(8) Prepare to take the offensive.

It will be observed that the basic tasks assigned CINCPOA in April 1942, while still applicable in 1944, were in the process of becoming obsolescent, and that those assigned COMSOWESPAC were, in fact, obsolete. It is not clear why the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not assign to both CINCPOA and COMSOWESPAC new basic tasks more suitable to the strategic situation which existed in the Pacific in the early fall of 1944. The Joint Staff Planners and the Joint War Plans Committee were fully aware of this need and had recommended new basic tasks as early as February 1944\* but the original directives remained unchanged at the time of the Battle for Leyte Gulf.

COMSOWESPAC was General Douglas MacArthur who had assumed command of that area on April 18th, 1942. His headquarters were at Hollandia, New Guinea.

The Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area (COMSOWESPAC) had organized his theater forces into a number of components: naval, air and ground, each under a commander who reported directly to him. He had as his naval commander a United States naval officer,\*\* designated Commander Allied Naval Forces Southwest Pacific Area, who was vested with all powers customarily granted to the Commanders-in-Chief of Fleets. Under this commander were all of the naval forces of the Allied Nations in the Southwest Pacific area.\*\*\* He had as his air commander an officer of the Air Corps, U.S. Army\*\*\*\* who was designated Commander Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific Area. This officer commanded all of the land-based air forces attached to SOWESPAC. As his ground commander, he had a general officer of the Australian Army\*\*\*\*\* who was designated Commander Allied Land Forces, Southwest Pacific Area. This officer, however, unlike the commanders of Allied Naval Forces and Allied Air Forces, did not command all land forces in the theater. The U.S. SIXTH

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\* Joint Chiefs of Staff 732, Joint Planning Staff Report "Modification in Basic Directives to Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area and to Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas," February 25th, 1944.

\*\* Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, USN.

\*\*\* SECNAV Letter (SC) A16-3(28), April 20th, 1942, page 1.

\*\*\*\* Lieut. General George C. Kenney (AC), USA.

\*\*\*\*\* General Sir Thomas Blamey.



Army, the U.S. EIGHTH Army, and the Australian FIRST Army all reported directly to the Supreme Commander who, in fact, also acted as Commander Allied Land Forces of the theater.

It is of interest that when task forces attached to CINCPAC or to COMSOWESPAC operated outside their respective areas, coordination with forces in the new operating area was to be effected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff or by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, as appropriate.\*

The command of combined operations with Australian forces was as follows: If carrier units were involved, the senior American naval officer would be in command because of the nature of carrier operations; otherwise, when the naval forces of the two powers were operating together and no carrier operations were involved, the senior officer of either power would be in command.\*\* For this reason, at the Battle of Surigao Strait, an Australian officer led one of the Allied destroyer attacks. No Australian ships were with the Pacific Fleet carrier task forces which supported COMSOWESPAC's operations.

(c) China-Burma-India Area (CBI)

The China-Burma-India Area designation was used only by the U.S. Army, and did not represent a single theater. Actually, the CBI area covered three separate theater commands:\*\*\*

(1) The China Theater under the command of a Supreme Commander\*\*\*\* who, as the Head of State, was given no tasks. His Chief of Staff was General J. W. Stilwell, USA.

(2) The Southeast Asia Command under a Supreme Commander,\*\*\*\*\* who operated under the British Chiefs of Staff. His Deputy Commander was General J. W. Stilwell, USA.

(3) The India Command under a Commander in Chief,\*\*\*\*\* who was responsible to the Government of India.

U.S. Forces in the CBI Area were commanded by General Stilwell as Commanding General, U. S. Forces, CBI, directly under the

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\* SECNAV Letter (SC) A16-3(28), April 20th, 1942, Enclosure (A).

\*\* War Diary CINCPAC, April 16th, 1942.

\*\*\* Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia, 1943-1945, London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951, para. 19.

\*\*\*\* Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek.

\*\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten.

\*\*\*\*\* General Claude Auchinleck, British Army.



American Joint Chiefs of Staff. They were, however, under the operation-control of the respective theater commanders.\* Thus, in China, U.S. Forces were under the command of General Stilwell as Commanding General, U.S. Forces, CBI, and under the operational control of the Generalissimo and his Chief of Staff, General Stilwell.

In China the FOURTEENTH Air Force and the TWENTIETH Bomber Command represented American combatant forces operating in that theater. The primary objective of the FOURTEENTH Air Force was tactical support of Chinese ground forces.\*\* However, the Generalissimo permitted the Commanding General, FOURTEENTH Air Force\*\*\* almost complete freedom in target selection.\*\*

The primary objective of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command was the destruction of Japanese military and industrial systems by strategic bombardment and mining.\*\*\*\* In accomplishing this objective, the TWENTIETH Bomber Command operated directly under the Joint Chiefs of Staff and not under the Generalissimo, nor under the C.G., U.S. Army Forces, CBI. The coordination of its activities with other forces is discussed under "Coordination of Operations with Adjacent Theater Commanders."

There was also operating within the China Theater an organization known as Naval Group, China.\*\*\*\*\* This group, in October 1944, operated directly under COMINCH. It accomplished many and varied tasks in the prosecution of the war. During the Battle for Leyte Gulf it was employed by Pacific naval commanders as a liaison agency to disseminate information, and to coordinate requests for cooperation from the China Theater. It was also employed to disseminate to interested naval commanders in the Pacific important contacts and intelligence information gathered by Allied units operating in China.\*\*\*\*\*

On October 25th, General Stilwell was relieved in China by Major General Albert C. Wedemeyer, USA, and the U.S. Army designation of CBI was changed from one to two geographical areas: China and

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\* Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia, 1943-1945, London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951, para. 20.

\*\* Director, USAAF Library Division, Air University, Letter, November 8th, 1950, to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* Major General Claire L. Chennault (AC), USA.

\*\*\*\* The Strategic Air Operations of Very Heavy Bombardment in the War Against Japan - Military Analysis Division, Army and Army Air Section, United States Strategic Bombing Survey, Final Report, September 1st, 1946.

\*\*\*\*\* Commanded by Commodore M. E. Miles, USN.

\*\*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Letter Serial 0020, June 1st, 1945. (Operations of U.S. Naval Group China.)

Burma-India. Major General Wedemeyer became Commanding General, U.S. Forces, China, and Chief of Staff to the Supreme Commander, China, while Major General Daniel I. Sultan, USA, became Commanding General, U.S. Forces, Burma-India.

Although the command setup for the CBI area seems reasonably clear, it did not, in fact, operate well, for the various Allied Commanders were so closely interlocked as to cause considerable confusion in the mind of the Commanding General, U.S. Forces, CBI, who stated ... "The command setup is a Chinese puzzle with (the various Allied commanders), and me interwoven and mixed beyond recognition."\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Such were the command organizations for the Pacific, Southwest Pacific, and China-Burma-India Areas in October 1944.

On September 8th, 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued their directive for the capture of Leyte. This capture was to be accomplished by COMSOWESPAC, who was to be supported by CINCPAC. The latter was directed to "furnish necessary fleet support and augment assault shipping for the Southwest Pacific Operations."\*\* COMSOWESPAC and CINCPAC were to arrange for coordination and mutual support.

The plan for the capture of the Leyte Gulf - Surigao Strait area had long been considered by COMSOWESPAC, and had been given the title KING II. COMSOWESPAC, in his Warning Instructions Number 5, had stated the mission as follows:

KING II - Seize control of the Leyte Gulf - Surigao Strait area and establish major air, naval, and logistics bases for the support of subsequent operations to reoccupy the Philippines. Target date--December 20th, 1944.\*\*\*

In the Joint Chiefs of Staff's dispatch directing the capture of Leyte, COMSOWESPAC was directed among other things: To occupy the Leyte-Surigao area with a target date of December 20th, 1944; to seize and develop bases and install forces in the Central Philippines to support a further advance directly to Formosa by Pacific Ocean Area Forces, target date - March 1st, 1945, or to seize Luzon - target date - February 20th, 1945.\*\*

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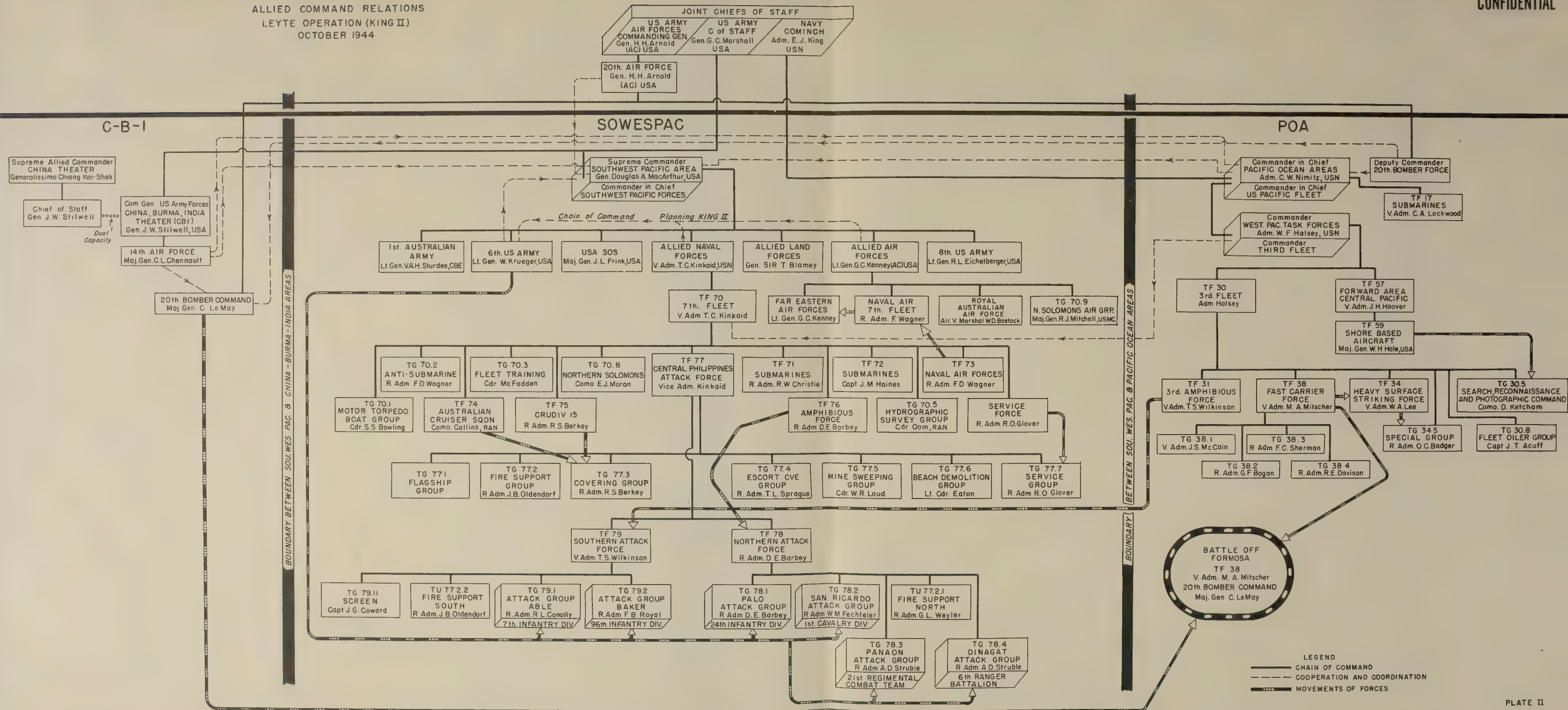
\* Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers, William Sloane Associates, Inc., New York, 1948, page 218.

\*\* Joint Chiefs of Staff Dispatch WARX 27648, September 8th, 1944 to COMSOWESPAC and CINCPAC.

\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Warning Instructions Number 5, August 31st, 1944.



ALLIED COMMAND RELATIONS  
LEYTE OPERATION (KING II)  
OCTOBER 1944







On September 15th, 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed that the target date for Leyte-Surigao operation be advanced to October 20th.\*

COMSOWESPAC then, on September 21st, 1944, issued his "Operations Instructions Number 70" wherein he directed that:

"Forces of the Southwest Pacific, covered and supported by the THIRD Fleet, will continue the offensive to re-occupy the Philippines by seizing and occupying objectives in the Leyte and Western Samar area, and will establish therein naval, air and logistic facilities for the support of subsequent operations. Target date--October 20th, 1944."\*\*

(2) Chain of Command within SOWESPAC (Plate II)

COMSOWESPAC, by agreement among the Allied Powers, was not eligible, as Supreme Commander, to command directly any national force.\*\*\* This did not prevent him from directly commanding the joint forces engaged in the Leyte operation, which he did. In this, he filled the role of a joint task force commander. As Supreme Commander, COMSOWESPAC designated Allied Naval Forces, SOWESPAC Area, Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC Area and the SIXTH Army as the components of the joint force to execute the Leyte campaign. In his Operations Instructions Number 70 he directed that Commanders of Allied Naval and Air Forces submit their plans for general support of the operation to the Supreme Commander. He further directed that "for the coordination of planning, the Commander Allied Naval and Air Forces will cause their respective close support commanders to report to the Commanding General SIXTH U.S. Army who is charged with the coordination of plans,"\*\* and also that the Commanding General SIXTH U.S. Army present the Supreme Commander with a brief of the coordinated plan of operations.\*\*

This method of obtaining coordination of planning by employing the commander of one unilateral service to coordinate the plans of the other services on the same echelon of command is not considered advisable as it may lead to too much emphasis on the requirements of the coordinating command.

It will be observed that this was an unusual situation and was not in complete accord with the approved procedures in effect in October 1944 for the joint action of the Army and the Navy. Normally, the plans of the commanders of the Allied Army, Navy, and Air Forces would have been coordinated and executed by a Joint Task Force Commander, who would have exercised unified command under the Supreme Commander. However,

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\* Joint Chiefs of Staff Dispatch 150746, September 1944, to CINCPAC and COMSOWESPAC.

\*\* COMSOWESPAC Operations Instructions Number 70, September 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* SECNAV Letter (SC) A16-3(28) April 20th, 1942, Enclosure (A).



COMSOWESPAC did not desire to set up such a task force commander, but preferred to retain such command himself. He appears to have felt that he could obtain equally satisfactory results by omitting the Joint Task Force Commander and by operating directly with the Commanders of the Allied Naval and Air Forces and with the Commanding General SIXTH Army whom he elevated to the same echelon of command as the above Commanders Allied Naval and Air Forces. In order to accomplish proper coordination he not only issued detailed "Operations Instructions" to his forces, but he also designated the SIXTH Army as a unit separate from his Allied Land Forces.\* Although this system operated satisfactorily because of the characters of the commanders concerned, it is not recommended as standard procedure.

It seems clear that, except for particular situations, it would be wiser to establish a Joint Task Force Commander who would not only coordinate the basic plans of those components of the Army, Navy and Air Forces which were involved in this operation, but who would also be in command in the objective area and would be empowered to make decisions concerning the unilateral services under his command.\*\*

As it was, Commander Allied Naval Forces, for reasons of his own, felt that it was advisable for him to assume command of the Central Philippines Attack Force (TF 77). By so doing he not only became involved in the tactical operations in the objective area, but he also assumed command responsibilities on three separate echelons viz., Commander Allied Naval Forces, Commander SEVENTH Fleet, and Commander Central Philippines Attack Force (CTF 77). While this assumption of tactical command by Commander Allied Naval Forces was not necessarily unsound, it could have resulted in his becoming so engrossed in the tactical details of the operation as to overlook possibly his basic responsibilities as Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC. Would it not have been more in keeping with his command responsibilities had he designated his next in command - in this case CTF 79 - to command TF 77 while he retained command of Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC and the SEVENTH Fleet?

Actually, although not so designated, the Commander of the Central Philippines Attack Force was in fact a joint task force commander during the amphibious movement and landing. For COMSOWESPAC directed in part that:

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\* COMSOWESPAC Operations Instructions Number 70, September 21st, 1944.

\*\* Joint Action Armed Forces September 1951, Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force, Chapter 3, Section 2, Sub-section 5 - Joint Task Force.



"During the amphibious movement and landing, the Commander Naval Attack Forces is in command of the amphibious operations; his command continues until the landing forces are established ashore."\*

It is of interest that after 1723 October 18th, COMSOWESPAC in the NASHVILLE was in the same task group with the Commander Central Philippines Attack Force.

(3) Coordination of Operations with Adjacent Theater Commanders

(a) COMSOWESPAC and CINCPAC

The coordination and mutual support ordered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the Leyte operation was accomplished in two ways. First, CINCPAC's Plans Officer\*\* in conference with COMSOWESPAC's Assistant Chief of Staff\*\*\* for Operations (G-3) agreed on September 21st, 1944, on a plan of operations for the THIRD Fleet commencing at D-10.\*\*\*\* This was approved by COMSOWESPAC on September 25th. Actually, as this plan of operations discussed also the employment of land-based naval bombers from Palau, it is presumed that this agreement covered the Western Pacific Task Forces\*\*\*\*\* more than it did the THIRD Fleet, which was a part of the Western Pacific Task Forces. Secondly, CINCPAC in his Operation Plan 8-44, directed that "Necessary measures for detailed coordination of operations between the Western Pacific Task Forces and forces of the Southwest Pacific will be arranged by their respective commanders."\*\*\*\*\* This was accomplished at Hollandia, New Guinea, during the period September 28th to October 1st, where the Commander Western Pacific Task Forces (Commander THIRD Fleet) completed his conferences with COMSOWESPAC and Commander SEVENTH Fleet, and made plans for the employment of Western Pacific Task Forces in support of KING I.\*\*\*\*\*

In paragraph two - the general plan paragraph of the above mentioned Operation Plan - CINCPAC directed that "Forces of the Pacific Ocean Area will cover and support forces of the Southwest Pacific Area."\*\*\*\*\* It

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\* COMSOWESPAC Operations Instructions Number 70, para. 3(x) 4.

\*\* Rear Admiral Forrest Sherman, USN.

\*\*\* Major General S.J. Chamberlin, USA.

\*\*\*\* Memorandum, September 21st, 1944, from Rear Admiral Forrest Sherman, USN and Major General Joseph Chamberlin, USA to COMSOWESPAC and CINCPAC on Coordination of Operations.

\*\*\*\*\* The Western Pacific Task Forces were those Pacific Ocean Area forces in the Western Pacific which were operating under the command of Admiral W.F. Halsey, USN and consisted essentially of the THIRD Fleet also commanded by Admiral Halsey, USN and the Forward Area, Central Pacific, commanded by Vice Admiral J.H. Hoover, USN.

\*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT, October 1944.



seems quite clear from this general plan paragraph that CINCPAC's objective for the general effort of the whole force was a double one embracing both "protection" and "support." He also directed in paragraph three - the task assignment paragraph - that the Western Pacific Task Forces were to destroy enemy naval and air forces in or threatening the Philippine area. This was a "destruction" objective, which limited the destruction to those enemy naval and air forces in or threatening the Philippine area. He further directed in this same paragraph, but under sub-paragraph X-ray, that "in case opportunity for destruction of major portion of the enemy fleet offer or can be created, such destruction becomes the primary task."\* This was also a "destruction" objective, but here the destruction objective was no longer limited to naval and air forces in or threatening the Philippine area, but instead, enemy naval and air forces almost anywhere, so long as their destruction contributed to the protection and support of the Southwest Pacific area, automatically became proper targets for the action of the Western Pacific Task Forces.

That this is a correct interpretation of CINCPAC's views is clear for in CINCPAC's report of his operations during October 1944 he stated very definitely:

" An understanding of the operations off Formosa during the middle of October requires that the basic task assigned the THIRD Fleet be kept in mind. That task, as already mentioned, was to create an opportunity to engage and destroy major portions of the enemy fleet. A secondary object was the destruction of enemy aircraft, and temporary neutralization of Formosa as a base for staging Japanese aircraft to the Philippines."\*\*

It is significant that Commander THIRD Fleet, (COMTHIRDFLT) in his Operation Order, placed the "destruction of enemy fleet" objective in his general plan paragraph as the primary effort to be accomplished by his whole force.\*\*\*

COMTHIRDFLT also in his Operation Order 21-44, stated in part that, after fueling on October 19th, his four carrier task groups which composed TF 38 would join off Samar "From where all groups (would) support landing operations Leyte as later directed, and as coordinated by Commander SEVENTH Fleet."\*\*\* (COMSEVENTHFLT)

This was in accordance with the agreement entered into by CINCPAC and COMSOPAC through their respective planners, wherein it was agreed that the THIRD Fleet, including the four carrier groups, would cover and

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\* CINCPAC Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\* Operations in the Pacific Ocean areas, October 1944, CINCPAC-CINCPAC, May 31st, 1945.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Operation Order 21-44, Dispatch 031600, October 1944.



support the KING II Operation by certain definite action prior to and during D day, and that "Beginning on D/1, and thereafter, will operate in strategic support of the (KING II) Operation effecting strikes as the situation at the time requires."\*

Nothing in CINCPOA's Operation Plan 3-44 or in COMTHIRDFLEET's Operation Order 21-44 required that Commander THIRD Fleet obtain the concurrence of COMSOWESPAC in executing any of his operations or of even advising him as to a change in plans. This omission is particularly important when "the destruction of the enemy fleet objective" referred to above, is considered. For by issuing this directive without, at the same time, requiring that the Commander Western Pacific Task Forces obtain the concurrence of the Commander of the forces being covered and supported, or, at the very least, inform that Commander of his change in plans, CINCPOA made possible a breakdown of that detailed coordination necessary for the success of an operation of the scope of KING II. Did he not thereby jeopardize the integrity of the Allied basic plan by making it possible for his supporting and covering forces to be drawn away from their basic role and, thereby, allow other powerful enemy forces to interfere with the SOWESPAC operations? The ideas here expressed are not new. Years ago the British naval historian, Corbett, expressed a similar idea when he said the "paramount function (of a covering force) is to prevent interference with the actual combined operations - that is, the landing, support and supply of the Army."\*\*

This was not the first occasion when CINCPOA had employed this "destruction of the enemy fleet" objective as an objective which might well supersede the originally assigned protection and support objectives as promulgated in paragraph two. He had issued exactly the same instructions, word for word, to his Commander Western Pacific Task Forces in his Operation Plan for the occupation of the Ulithi-Palau line promulgated some two months earlier.\*\*\* But there was a marked difference in these two operations. Not only were the operations for the seizure of the Ulithi-Palau line much smaller in scope than were the operations for the seizure of Leyte and the strategic implications of failure far less, but (and this is vital), the former operation was completely under CINCPOA with limited assistance necessary from COMSOWESPAC, whereas the latter operation was under COMSOWESPAC with great assistance necessary from CINCPOA, under whom was the fast carrier task force. In considering the Ulithi-Palau operation, it is apparent that the possibility of destroying a major portion of the enemy fleet, when weighed against the

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\* Memorandum September 21st, 1944 from Rear Admiral Forrest Sherman, USN, and Major General Joseph Chamberlin, USA, to COMSOWESPAC and CINCPOA on Coordination of Operations.

\*\* Some Principles of Maritime Strategy by Julian S. Corbett, published by Longmans, Green and Co., 1911, page 291.

\*\*\* CINCPOA Operation Plan 6-44, Serial 00563, July 21st, 1944.



possibility of failure of the seizure operations, offered a calculated risk which, if successful, could improve considerably the Allied situation in the Western Pacific. Even if the seizure operations failed, it is quite likely that the Allied strategic plan would not have been seriously affected thereby, although the timetable for its various phases would probably have been upset. Can the same remarks be made concerning the effect that Allied failure in the Leyte operation might have had on Allied strategy in the Pacific?

In the plans for the employment of the Western Pacific Task Forces in support of KING II, the Commander Western Pacific Task Forces operating in the SOWESPAC area in support of COMSOWESPAC, was not under the orders of COMSOWESPAC even to the remotest degree. He was at all times under CINCPAC. In a similar fashion the Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC was under COMSOWESPAC and not under the orders of CINCPAC or of CINCPAC's Commander Western Pacific Task Forces.

This command situation has been highly criticized as having been responsible for the near disaster to the Allied arms which occurred during the battle of October 25th. It has been strongly suggested in some circles that this might have been avoided had Commander Western Pacific Task Forces been ordered to report to COMSOWESPAC through Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC. This is not considered to have been the correct solution since the "covering" responsibilities of Commander Western Pacific Task Forces embraced operations over vast geographic areas which were often far removed from the areas of his "support" responsibilities. Although it is realized that political as well as personal factors probably prevented a proper solution it is believed that a possible solution would have been to have had COMSOWESPAC report to CINCPAC for this operation. In such case CINCPAC could well have designated COMSOWESPAC as the joint task force commander, supported by and covered by Commander Western Pacific Task Forces. The activities of both commanders would then have been coordinated by a mutual superior who could require close collaboration in the accomplishment of the tasks incident to all operations involved in the entire Western Pacific during this period. Under such a command setup only a single strategic commander would have been responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staffs for the prosecution of this complex and crucial phase of the war. For the proper strategic control of these wide spread operations it would have been most advantageous for CINCPAC to have exercised this command from Guam rather than Pearl Harbor, even if this had required the setting-up of temporary advanced operational headquarters.

(b) COMSOWESPAC and CBI (Plate II)

No formal agreement existed between COMSOWESPAC and the CG U.S. Army Forces in the CBI Theater, concerning the coordination of the



CBI operations with the KING II Operation.\* Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the Southeast Asia Command, of which certain of the U.S. Forces in the CBI Theater were, at times, a part, was concerned with the KING II Operation, and had planned operations in its own area which were designed to provide considerable diversionary support to COMSOWESPAC. These planned operations were to consist of (1) air attacks on the Japanese lines of communication from Bangkok, Siam, to Moulmein, Burma, (2) an air attack on the Rangoon area, (3) increased ground and air operations in Burma, (4) and, finally, by a British naval bombardment and carrier strike against the Nicobar Islands, which lie just north of Sumatra.\*\* This latter operation was designed to mislead the enemy into thinking that landings were imminent.\*\*\* These arrangements appear to have been made as follows: The United States made a request through the Combined Chiefs of Staff, on Great Britain to carry out operations as feasible in support of KING II.\*\*\*\* The British Chiefs of Staff then directed the Supreme Allied Commander (SAC) Southeast Asia to comply; that commander determined what supporting operations he could accomplish and advised COMSOWESPAC of his plans. COMSOWESPAC in turn advised his interested commanders by dispatch.

The Southeast Asia Command carried out all of the above planned operations with the exception of Item two, the air attack on the Rangoon area, which operation does not appear to have been undertaken. The attack on the Nicobar Islands which occurred between October 17th and 21st was a "sustained operation with attacks lasting for more than three days."\*\*\* Actually, in the opinion of the SEAC, these diversionary operations were ineffective for Japanese reaction was slight, and instead of holding the fleet in the Lingga-Singapore area, the Japanese departed for Brunei Bay and the Battle for Leyte Gulf.\*\*\* This opinion of SEAC was correct for the Japanese realized that the operations were diversionary.\*\*\*\*\*

However, as the only operations with which this study is concerned are (a) the air operations in direct support of KING II, conducted by the U.S. Army Forces in the CBI Theater, and, in particular, by the

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\* Office of Chief of Military History Letter, February 6th, 1951, to President, Naval War College, signed by Orlando Ward, Major General, U.S. Army, Chief of Military History.

\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 151255 October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMTHIRDFLT, CTF 77 and CG 6th Army.

\*\*\* Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia, 1943-1945, London: His Majesty's Stationery Office 1951, para. 283.

\*\*\*\* Ibid, paras. 280-283, inclusive.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



FOURTEENTH Air Force, and (b) the air operations, in the same theater, conducted by the TWENTIETH Bomber Command, further reference to the Southeast Asia Command will be omitted.

In connection with these air operations, it should be noted that the CG, U.S. Army Forces in the CBI Theater\* was advised by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as early as September 18th, 1944, of the imminence of KING II.\*\* He was also advised that CINCPAC, whose Western Pacific Task Forces would be operating off the Nansei Shoto, Formosa, and the Philippines, in support of KING II, would request him by radio for air support from the CBI bases.\*\* Therefore, it should be clear that a cooperation and coordination channel did exist from that date forward.

The FOURTEENTH Air Force, commanded by Major General Claire L. Chennault, U.S. Army, was under the operational control of the CG, U.S. Army Forces in the CBI, who kept his CBI command abreast of CINCPAC's wishes regarding KING II.\*\*

The TWENTIETH Bomber Command, on the other hand, operated directly under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, through the CG, U.S. Army Air Forces in Washington. The CG, U.S. Army Air Forces advised the interested commanders on September 29th, 1944, that operations of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command in support of KING II, would be directed by the Headquarters of the TWENTIETH Air Force in Washington in the same manner that strategic operations were directed. He further advised that coordination would be effected as follows: (a) local coordination to prevent conflict between the operations of the TWENTIETH Air Force and the FOURTEENTH Air Force, and which consisted largely of an exchange of flight information, would be the responsibility of the CG, U.S. Army Forces in the CBI; (b) coordination with COMSOWESPAC would be accomplished by direct exchange of information between COMSOWESPAC and the Headquarters TWENTIETH Air Force; and (c) coordination with the THIRD Fleet (TF 38) in the Formosa area was to be accomplished through the Deputy Commander of the TWENTIETH Air Force in the POA.\*\*\*

As a consequence of these instructions, the CG, U.S. Army Forces in the CBI made certain coordinating arrangements which followed the above instructions closely, with the principal exception that he designated the CG, FOURTEENTH Air Force as the coordinating agency of

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\* General Joseph W. Stilwell, USA.

\*\* Office of Chief of Military History Letter, February 6th, 1951, to President, Naval War College, signed by Orlando Ward, Major General, USA, Chief of Military History.

\*\*\* CG, Army Air Forces Dispatch WARK 38830, September 29th, 1944, to COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, CG, U.S. Army Forces CBI, Deputy Commander CBI Theater, CG, TWENTIETH Bomber Command.



the CBI Theater, and directed that officer to coordinate his air strikes with those of CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC and the TWENTIETH Bomber Command.\* That the CG, U.S. Army Forces in the CBI Theater felt a heavy responsibility for the coordination of his air strikes is apparent from his unpublished diaries for October 14th and 15th, 1944, which show that he not only took a personal interest in the TWENTIETH Bomber Command's activities, but in fact, visited certain of that command's airfields to witness the departure of the bombing groups, and, in addition, studied the photographic results of the bombings.\*\*

#### (4) Air Coordination

The air situation was highly confused, for operating in support of the same amphibious landing operation were five distinct air organizations over which there was no single commander. These air organizations operated through cooperation and coordination. They were : (1) Certain air components of the Army Air Forces (FOURTEENTH Air Force) operating from China bases; (2) the TWENTIETH Bomber Command - portion of the TWENTIETH Air Force - also operating from China bases; (3) certain air components of the Western Pacific Task Forces which included the carrier-based aircraft of the THIRD Fleet, and the land-based aircraft of the Forward Area, Central Pacific; (4) certain air components of the Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC, and (5) the carrier-based aircraft of the SEVENTH Fleet, which were based in the escort carriers, and the anti-submarine aircraft of the SEVENTH Fleet. Actually, the air components in (4) and (5) were under COMSOWESPAC, but, even here, as will be shown later, these groups operated under separate task force commanders and had no over-all commander in the objective area, at least prior to the arrival of COMSOWESPAC in that area on October 20th.

#### (5) Summation

In summation then, it is clear that the command situation for the Leyte operation left much to be desired. Although unity of command existed within SOWESPAC, this unity of command was on occasions more illusory than real. It was in the person of COMSOWESPAC who did not exercise such command except possibly after he had arrived in the objective area off Leyte. Instead, he delegated the coordination of all plans to the Commanding General, SIXTH Army and the execution of these plans to the cooperative and coordinated command of the commanders of his Army, Navy and Air Forces.

Of the five separate air organizations involved in the operation,

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\* CG, U.S. Army Forces Dispatch CRA 15561 CM-IN-2830, October 3rd, 1944, to U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

\*\* Office of Chief of Military History, Letter, February 6th, 1951 to President, Naval War College, signed by Orlando Ward, Major General, USA, Chief of Military History.



COMSOWESPAC commanded only two. The air components of the Western Pacific Task Forces, and of the FOURTEENTH Air Force based in China, operated under their respective force commanders and supported the Leyte operation through cooperation and coordination only, as did the air components of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command, which operated from China bases, but under the direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

There was no separate joint task force organization set up for this operation. Instead, the theater commander appears to have assumed direct command of all forces of SOWESPAC engaged in the Leyte operation in addition to his over-all responsibilities as theater commander. Also, his theater Navy and Air Force commanders assumed corresponding tactical command of their own forces involved in the operation in addition to their theater responsibilities. The Commanding General, SIXTH Army, unlike the Navy and Air Force component commanders in the Leyte operation, had no theater responsibilities beyond command of the SIXTH Army; the over-all theater command of ground forces remained a function of COMSOWESPAC.

Finally, the introduction of an overriding objective for the Commander Western Pacific Task Forces - the destruction of a major portion of the Japanese Fleet - in lieu of destroying enemy naval forces in or threatening the Philippine area, - made possible a breakdown of the agreed coordination between these two commanders, for the protection and support of the SOWESPAC area.

(b) INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE ALLIED NAVAL COMMANDER\*

(1) The Allied Naval Commander did not believe that major elements of the Japanese Fleet would be involved in opposition to the Allied landings at Leyte. He believed this because he considered that the damage recently dealt Japanese aircraft, and the coverage now possible for American reconnaissance planes would force the Japanese to withdraw what fleet units were within the Manila Bay sector to safer harbors in the direction of Lingga and the Empire.

In all fairness it should be pointed out here that this conclusion as to Japanese intentions was not peculiar to the Allied Naval Commander alone, but was also the opinion of COMSOWESPAC and the Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC. This is clearly shown as follows: (a) On September 24th which he later confirmed on October 4th, Commander Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC stated:\*\* "It is believed that the whole of the waters of the Philippines will be hazardous for the movement of enemy major elements of the Japanese Fleet and fleet action is less likely than ever." (b) October 15th COMSOWESPAC in his Intelligence Summary on that date stated ... "As to the Navy, while it may move in strength in and out of protected stations in home or adjacent waters, it is doubtful

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\* CANFSOWESPACAREA Operation Plan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex M, brought up to date by CTF 77 Dispatch 160611, October 1944.

\*\* Annex 3 to Operations Instructions No. 71 Headquarters Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC, September 24th, 1944 corrected to October 4th, 1944 by Operations Instructions 71/1.



if it will seek any issue beyond the cover of land-based airplanes."\* (c) COMSOWESPAC's Headquarters, among other things, advised COMSOWESPAC by dispatch on October 18th that, on October 15th, the Japanese FIRST Striking Force was in the Singapore-Brunei area (actually it was in the Singapore-Lingga area), and that owing to the assignment of tankers and their rendezvous in the Pescadores, a sortie by the FIRST Striking Force to the north was indicated rather than an eastward entry into Philippine waters.\*\* (d) October 21st COMSOWESPAC in his Intelligence Summary for this date, stated: (1) Enemy Air - Forward Area (Northern Luzon, Formosa, Nansei Shoto). Defeated in the air, harassment and limited defense only remains. (2) Enemy Naval Units - No apparent intent to interfere with our Leyte landings.\*\*\* (e) October 22nd Commander Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC, referring to the THIRD Fleet's devastating air attacks on the Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon areas, and particularly to his attacks on Manila and on the shipping there, stated: . . . "It must be recorded again that, in spite of extreme provocation, the Japanese Fleet did not appear during these memorable days. With helpless though not indifferent eyes, it saw the enactment of another phase in the smashing of the Japanese merchant marine."\*\*\*\*

All of the above indicates that the Allied Commanders in SOWESPAC were operating on the basis of enemy intentions, rather than on the basis of enemy capabilities, for the Japanese reacted with their entire fleet, and with major elements of their air force, and made an eastward entry into the Philippines. In fact, SHO One, which was the all-out defense of the Philippines, had been activated four days earlier (at 1732, October 18th, 1944),\*\*\*\* and, at the very time the latter two estimates were being made, the Japanese Fleet was well at sea en route the Leyte area to contest the landings.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Intelligence Summary, Headquarters Allied Air Forces SOWESPACAREA, Serial 245, October 15th, 1944, paragraph 4.

\*\* GHQ, SOWESPAC Dispatch 171536, October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC (in NASHVILLE).

\*\*\* Intelligence Summary No. 20, Periodic Summary of Enemy Trends, GHQ, SOWESPACAREA Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Intelligence Summary, Headquarters Allied Air Forces SOWESPACAREA, Serial 246, October 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 366 (181732), FIRST Striking Force Battle Report, October 16th-28th, 1944, SHO Operations (including the Battle off the Philippines), WDC Document 161641.

\*\*\*\*\* As an indication of this generally accepted erroneous trend of thought, Captain Raymond D. Tarbuck, USN, in G-3 GHQ SOWESPAC on October 4th, 1944 prepared an intelligence memorandum which forecast that (a) Japanese naval reaction would be limited to Tokyo Express runs by light surface forces from Brunei Bay, assisted by diversionary operations in the South China Sea by heavy units of the FIRST Striking Force and (b) the enemy carrier strength would probably operate in the East China Sea-Empire area in defense of the homeland, and therefore could be dismissed from calculation as kept out of KING II operations by the THIRD Fleet.



(2) (a) He believed, on September 26th, the time he issued his basic plan, that the Japanese Fleet was deployed about as follows:

	<u>BB</u>	<u>CV</u>	<u>CVL</u>	<u>CVE</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>CL</u>	<u>DD</u>	<u>SS</u>
Empire and Northern Japan	4	5	5	1	3	7	16	50
N. Borneo-Philippines	1				3	2	8	10
Singapore-Lingga	4	1		3	8	1	18	5

These estimates were correct as regards the total number and distribution of light carriers (CVL);\* they were correct as regards the total number of the heavy cruisers (CA),\*\* they were incorrect as regards their distribution. Actually, there were twelve heavy cruisers in the Lingga-Singapore area, and but two in the Empire.\*\*\* They were correct as regards the total number of battleships, if the ISE and HYUGA, battleship carriers (BB/XCV), are carried as battleships.\*\*\*\*

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- \* The five light carriers which the Japanese Fleet possessed at this time were ZUIHO, CHITOSE, CHIYODA, RYUHO and HOSHO. They were all located in the Inland Sea area of Japan proper on September 26th. Tabular Records of Japanese carriers, WDC Document 160677, NA 11792.
- \*\* Tabular Records of Japanese cruisers, WDC Document 160623, NA 11784; and Summary of Merit Reports for Warships and Special Service Ships, June 1st - November 30th, 1944, Navy Board of Merit, WDC Document 160866, NA 12040; War Diary CRUDIV 16, September 1944, WDC Document 160986, NA 11730; War Diary KUMANO, September 1944, WDC Document 160162, NA 11975; War Diary TONE, September 1944, WDC Document 160144, NA 11841; War Diary TAKAO, September 1944, WDC Document 160141, NA 11839; War Diary CHIKUMA, September 1944, WDC Document 160165, NA 11852.
- \*\*\* Sources covering the distribution of Japanese heavy cruiser strength as of September 26th are the same as listed in the preceding footnote. Specific data are lacking with respect to the location on this date of ATAGO, MAYA, CHOKAI, MYOKO, and MOGAMI; however, since other ships of the same units were definitely placed in the Lingga-Singapore area, engaged in joint battle training and maneuvers of the FIRST Striking Force the presumption is that these five ships were also in the same area.
- \*\*\*\* Summary of Merit Reports for Warships and Special Service Ships, June 1st - November 30th, 1944, Navy Board of Merit, WDC Document 160866, NA 12040; Revisions of Wartime Organization Imperial Navy, 1942-1945, FIRST Section, Naval General Staff, WDC Document (microfilm) 216766, entry of September 10th, 1944, recording the reactivation of BATDIV 2 (YAMASHIRO and FUSO).



Certainly these ships never carried carrier type planes in combat. However, it seems possible that they did carry seaplanes on occasions,\* but did not do so in this operation. The estimates were somewhat incorrect as regards distribution of these battleships. The four battleships reported in the Empire on September 26th had, by that date, been reduced to two--the ISE and HYUGA.\*\* The other two battleships, the FUSO and YAMASHIRO had departed for Lingga on September 23rd.\*\*\* The estimates were incorrect as regards the number of first-line carriers, as at this time there were but three first-line carriers operative. These were the ZUIKAKU, AMAGI and UNRYU.\*\*\*\* Perhaps CTF 77 had included in his estimates the new carrier KATSURAGI and SHINANO which had not as yet been completed,\*\*\*\*\* and the converted carrier (XCV) JUNYO. All first-line carriers were in the Empire.\*\*\*\* The estimates were partially correct as regards the escort carriers (CVE) both in numbers and distribution. However, there were but two escort carriers remaining in the Japanese Navy. These were the KAIYO and SHINYO. Of these escort carriers, the KAIYO was in the Empire; the SHINYO was in the Lingga-Singapore area.\*\*\*\*\* The estimates were almost correct as regards the number of light cruisers (CL). However, there were eleven instead of ten light cruisers at this time.\*\*\*\*\* The distribution was incorrect as the light cruisers reported in the North Borneo-Philippines area were, in fact, in

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\* Japanese Naval Vessels at the End of the War, compiled by Shizuo Fukui, Administrative Division, Second Demobilization Bureau, April 25th, 1947.

\*\* Summary of Merit Reports for Warships and Special Service Ships, June 1st - November 30th, 1944, Navy Board of Merit, WDC Document 160866, NA 12040.

\*\*\* Summary of Merit Reports for Warships and Special Service Ships, June 1st - November 30th, 1944, Navy Board of Merit, WDC Document 160866, NA 12040; War Diary DESRON 10, September 1944, WDC Document 160985A.

\*\*\*\* Tabular Records of Japanese carriers, WDC Document 160677, NA 11792.

\*\*\*\*\* Table showing Construction, Launching, and Commissioning dates of Japanese carriers, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, IPS Document No. 6263, Records of International Military Tribunal for the Far East.

\*\*\*\*\* Tabular Records of Japanese carriers, WDC Document 160677, NA 11792; also War Diary FIRST Surface Escort Force, September 1944, WDC Document 161719, NA 11609.

\*\*\*\*\* Summary of Merit Reports for Warships and Special Service Ships, June 1st - November 30th, 1944, Navy Board of Merit, WDC Document 160866, NA 12040; War Diary CRUDIV 16, September 1944, WDC Document 160986, NA 11730.



the Lingga-Singapore area.\* The estimates were almost correct as regards the destroyers in the Lingga-Singapore area, as there were seventeen destroyers there rather than sixteen, but were incorrect as regards both the Empire and the N. Borneo-Philippines area.\*\* There were thirty-one destroyers in the Empire at this time rather than sixteen, and there were six destroyers in the N. Borneo-Philippines rather than eight.\*\* The estimates were considerably in error as regards the submarines. There were actually thirty submarines in the Empire, five in the N. Borneo-Philippines area, and four in the Lingga-Singapore area.\*\*\* Perhaps twenty old submarines employed for training purposes only in the Inland Sea were included in CTF 77's estimate.\*\*\*\*

(b) His opinion as to the location of these ships seems to have undergone some changes by October 16th, 1944, which was one day prior to the Allied landing on Suluan Island, for on that date he stated in a dispatch to the THIRD and SEVENTH Fleets that he believed the Japanese carriers were concentrated in the Empire, and that the bulk of battleships and heavy cruisers were apparently in the South China Sea area.\*\*\*\*\* This was a very loose estimate as the correctness of the estimate was

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- \* Summary of Merit Reports for Warships and Special Service Ships, June 1st - November 30th, 1944, Navy Board of Merit, WDC Document 160866, NA 12040; War Diary CRUDIV 16, September 1944, WDC Document 160986, NA 11730. (These sources do not contain specific data with respect to the location of OYODO on September 26th. However, since OYODO was flagship of Combined Fleet at this date, she was presumably in home waters. War Diary OYODO for October establishes that the ship was in drydock at Yokosuka on October 1st).
  - \*\* Tabular Records of Japanese Destroyers, WDC Documents 160620, 160621, NA 11790, and 160676; War Diary DESRON 10, September 1944, WDC Document 160985-A; War Diary DESRON 11, September 1944, WDC Document 161715, NA 12712; War Diary DESDIV 30, September 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11800; War Diary DESDIV 27, September 1944, WDC Document 161717, NA 11796; War Diary DESRON 1, September 1944, WDC Document 161718, NA 12709; War Diary FIRST Surface Escort Force, September 1944, WDC Document 161719, NA 11609; War Diary THIRD Surface Escort Force, September 1944, WDC Document 161719, NA 11598; War Diary CRUDIV 16, September 1944, WDC Document 160986, NA 11730.
  - \*\*\* War Diary SUBRON 11, September 1944, WDC Document 161714, NA 11677; War Diary SUBRON 7, September 1944, WDC Document 161714, NA 11675; Japanese Studies in World War II, No. 15, Submarine Operations in Philippine Waters 1944-1945, U.S. Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-15.
  - \*\*\*\* Japanese Studies in World War II, No. 15, Submarine Operations in Philippine Waters 1944-1945, U.S. Army Historical Division, File No. 8-5, JS-15.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMSEVENTHFLT Dispatch 160611, October 1944 to THIRD and SEVENTH Fleets.



dependent on the interpretation of the words "bulk" and "South China Sea." Actually, all battleships, except the ISE and HYUGA, and all heavy cruisers, except the NACHI and ASHIGARA, were in the Lingga-Singapore Area.\* The light forces remained as of the September 26th estimate.

(c) It is of interest that some days later - October 20th - CINCPOA had made an estimate which indicated that the following ships were operational and were distributed as follows:\*\*

	<u>BB</u>	<u>CV</u>	<u>BB/XCV</u>	<u>CVL</u>	<u>CVE</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>CL</u>	<u>DD</u>
Empire-Formosa	3	6	2	5	3	4	7	20
Singapore	4				1	11	2-3	20

This estimate was considerably less correct than CTF 77's, for, on October 18th the entire First Striking Force had left the Lingga-Singapore area for Brunei Bay, North Borneo, arriving there at 1210, October 20th. It was incorrect as regards the first-line carriers, as at this time there were only four. One of these was the KATSURAGI which was commissioned on October 15th, 1944.\*\*\* It is not known what effect, if any, this incorrect estimate had on CTF 77 or Commander THIRD Fleet. (COMTHIRDFLT)

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\* War Diaries BATDIV 1, CRUDIV 5, CRUDIV 7, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739; War Diaries HYUGA, SUZUYA, MYOKO, October 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 11973; War Diary TONE, October 1944, WDC Document 160144, NA 11841; War Diary KUMANO, October 1944, WDC Document 160162, NA 11975; Detailed Action Reports KONGO and HARUNA, SHO I Operation, October 1944, WDC Document 161637; Detailed Action Reports HYUGA and ISE, SHO I Operation, October 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 12604; Detailed Action Report CRUDIV 16, SHO I Operation, October 17th-27th, 1944, WDC Document 161006, NA 11744; Detailed Action Reports MYOKO, HAGURO, TONE, MAYA, SUZUYA, ATAGO and AOBA, SHO I Operations, October 1944, WDC Document 161747.

\*\* Operations in the Pacific Ocean areas, October 1944, prepared by CINCPAC-CINCPOA, May 31st, 1945, page 55.

\*\*\* Japanese Naval Vessels at the End of the War, compiled by Shizuo Fukui Administrative Division, Second Demobilization Bureau, April 25th, 1947.

Actually, the distribution of Japanese surface forces at this time (October 20th), was:\*

	<u>BB</u>	<u>CV/XCV</u>	<u>BB/XCV</u>	<u>CVL</u>	<u>CVE</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>CL</u>	<u>DD</u>
Empire-Formosa		5	2	5	2	2	8	30
Brunei	7					12	3	20

(3) He believed it possible that a fast task force might strike the Allied supply lines taking full advantage of darkness, surprise and land-based air. This was a correct estimate which, although it failed to materialize, in no way lessens its accuracy. The Japanese orders were that "If it is possible to discern the movements of the enemy supply force the Main Force will come down upon the enemy supply force and annihilate it completely."\*\*

(4) He knew that the Japanese had fifty-two operational airfields within a radius of 360 miles from Tacloban of which he classified twenty-one as major air bases. He also knew that there were numerous runways in the area which could be used for emergency landings and probably for staging. This estimate appears to have been reasonably correct. There were approximately sixty operational airfields of which about twelve were major air bases. These twelve were located as follows: Four at Luzon, two at Cebu, two at Negros, one at Zamboanga, three at Mindanao.\*\*\*

(5) He believed that there would not be many concentrations of aircraft south of the Manila area. However, he felt that the Japanese would attempt to build up garrisons on several of the fields in the Visayas, notably at Cebu, Bacolod, Dumaguete, La Carlota and Iloilo. He felt also that they would be stationed in strength at Zamboanga, Mindanao, with small units at Davao and in the Cagayan Del Monte region. As of October 16th he estimated that these aircraft would be

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\* Tabular Records Japanese Naval Vessels.

\*\* Mobile Force Operations Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Documents).

\*\*\* Imperial Headquarters Directive 435, July 26th, 1944, WDC 216769 (Microfilm) also Naval Air Operations in the Philippines area, 1942-1945, Historical Section G-2, GHQ, FEC, ATIS, August 1947, also Documents from file kept by Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato FOURTH Air Army, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7, Agreement probably made late summer 1944; also Philippine Air Operations, Phase II, Vol. 46, from records of Colonel Matsumae, I.J.A., First Demobilization Board, October 1946.



located as follows:

<u>Immediate Area of Operations</u>	Twin Engine		<u>VT</u>	<u>Float Planes</u>	<u>Flying Boats</u>	<u>Reccos</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>VF</u>	<u>VB</u>					
Mindanao	17	10	16	5	2	4	54
Visayas	64	12	11	10	3	3	103
Luzon	166	58	30	10	5	6	265
Total Philippines							422

He estimated that the Formosan air strength was 230 aircraft of all types and that not more than 100 of these aircraft would be drawn on for the defense of the Philippines.\* These estimates as to aircraft strength and location were generally inaccurate. A detailed analysis of the data available indicates that as of the morning of October 17th, planes available to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force in the Philippines totalled 145; to CG, FOURTH Air Army in the Philippines 205, or a total of 350 planes in the Philippines.\*\* At the same time there were 250 operational planes under the command of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in Formosa.\*\*\*

The estimate as to the number of planes in Formosa which would be drawn on for the defense of the Philippines was also inaccurate. On October 18th, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force issued his SHO One attack organization order which provided for the advance to the Philippines of 330 aircraft.\*\*\*\*

(6) He estimated that, owing to American air attacks on Japanese airfields in the Philippine-Dutch East Indies areas, and in fuel dumps in the same areas, the Japanese would be seriously handicapped in forming large scale air attacks against American forces. This was a reasonably correct estimate. However, it did not take into consideration the Japanese capability of launching Kamikaze plane attacks against American

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\* COMSEVENTHFLT Dispatch 160611, October 1944 to THIRD and SEVENTH Fleets.

\*\* See Composition of Forces and Tasks Assigned, Chapter III, part (g).

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* CofS, SIXTH Base Air Force Essentials of SIXTH Base Air Force SHO I Attack Operation Order, War Diary Kokubu Detachment, 103rd Attack Unit, October 13th-31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258.



combat shipping, but this was a capability generally overlooked by all American commanders at this time. At least there is no mention of this capability in the basic plans of the principal commanders.

(7) He believed that the Japanese air reaction in the initial phase of the KING II Operation would be moderate not to exceed a total of seventy to eighty fighters and bombers in the air. He expected that shipping would be subjected to torpedo and bomber attacks with the first few days' attacks limited to small night and pre-dawn harassing raids by small groups of from four to six planes.\* This was a reasonably correct estimate. Prior to D day, bombing attacks were made but seven times, employing only a limited number of planes.\*\* After D day these attacks increased in frequency and intensity, but it is doubtful that at any time as many as eighty planes were in the air over Leyte.

(8) He expected no reinforcement of air strength from Japan, East Indies, Hainan Island or French Indo-China, nor did he expect any air attacks from carrier-based aircraft.\* This estimate was incorrect for strong reinforcements were flown in from all areas. This was basic to the SHO Plan. It was incorrect as regards no carrier air strikes against surface forces as there was one carrier-based air strike against TF 38. It was correct as regards no carrier-based air strikes against occupying forces.

(9) He believed that a minimum of sixty PT boats were based in the central and southern Philippine Islands, and that numerous other armored craft, such as Hayabusa boats, were also in the area. He further believed that these craft would be employed offensively against Allied shipping, as well as defensively in the protection of reinforcement barge runs. He believed that the Japanese had in the Visayan area a total of fifty special large barges, 200 Type "A" barges, and 300 small barges.\*\*\* On October 16th, his opinion as to the locations of these small craft became somewhat more specific for on that date he estimated that there were approximately thirty-five PT boats and five Hayabusa boats in the east Leyte coastal area.\*

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\* COMSEVENTHFLT Dispatch 160611, October 1944 to THIRD and SEVENTH Fleets.

\*\* Action Report COMCRUDIV 4 (CTG 77.2), Bombardment and Capture of Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, October 16th-24th, 1944, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTG 70.1 Operation Plan 2-44, October 5th, 1944, Annex D.



It is difficult to comment on this estimate since Japanese data available to this study on the strength and disposition of small attack craft is very inconclusive. It is known however, that during July and August plans were formulated to construct "Special Sea Attack Unit" bases at Davao, Tacloban, Sarangani, Zamboanga, Lamon Bay and Batangas, for suicide boats, Type A midget submarines and one-man torpedoes. However, work on the Davao and Zamboanga bases was discontinued during October, while the Tacloban base, which was still under construction on October 16th, was lost to the enemy on October 20th.\*

(10) He estimated that the Leyte ground forces consisted of 18,000 men deployed in part, as follows: Tacloban 4,000, Dulag 5,000.\*\* He estimated that there were in Surigao Peninsula, 1,200; Islands of Leyte Gulf, 300; and Samar, 5,000 men. He also estimated that, in view of the present large concentrations in the vicinity of Cebu (approximately 5,000 men), there was a possibility that substantial numbers of these troops might be employed to reinforce the Leyte garrisons.\*\* Actually, there were about 16,000 troops on Leyte at the time of the Allied landing.\*\*\*

(11) He had reason to believe that some of the principal minefields were located as follows:

(a) Verde Island Passage - Western approach possibly mined.

(b) Balabac Strait - All channels mined except the main channel south of Mangsee Great Reef.

(c) San Bernardino Strait - probably mined.

(d) Between Candolu Island, Samar, and Suluan Island; between Homonhon Island and Dinagat Island; and between North Mindanao and South Dinagat Island; also possible mines between Suluan and Homonhon Island.

(e) Tacloban - Approaches probably mined.

(f) Surigao - Approaches probably mined.

Although information concerning whether or not mines were actually located in the above areas has been difficult to obtain, it is known that chemical horn type mines were discovered during minesweeping operations

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\* Naval Air Operations in the Philippines area, 1942-1945, Historical Section G2, GHQ, FEC, File No. 8-5, JS-14.

\*\* COMSEVENTHFLT Dispatch 160611, October 1944 to THIRD and SEVENTH Fleets.

\*\*\* Report of Leyte Operation, October 20th-December 25th, 1944, SIXTH Army, 1945, page 34.

October 17th-20th, between Suluan Island and Candolu Island, and between Dinagat Island and Homonhon Island.\*

(c) ALLIED LAND AND TENDER BASED AIRCRAFT

Allied land and tender based aircraft involved in the Leyte Campaign operated under five separate commands from bases in three theaters of operation: SOWESPAC, POA, and CBI. Coordination was obtained by mutual cooperation.

(1) Southwest Pacific Area

There were two land and tender based air commands under COMSOWESPAC notably the Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, commanded by Lieutenant General G.C. Kenney, (AC), USA and the Anti-submarine Group (TG 70.2) commanded by Rear Admiral F.D. Wagner, USN, under COMSEVENTHFLT.

(a) Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC

This command comprised the land and tender based aviation of the Southwest Pacific area less TG 70.2. Its headquarters were at Hollandia. Its major subordinate command was the Far Eastern Air Forces also commanded by Lieutenant General G.C. Kenney, and composed of the FIFTH and THIRTEENTH U.S. Army Air Forces. Headquarters of the Far Eastern Air Forces was at Hollandia with a rear echelon at Brisbane.

The components of Allied Air Forces were:

(1) FIFTH Air Force under Major General E.C. Whitehead, (AC), USA with headquarters at Owi, one of the Schouten Islands south of Biak.

(2) THIRTEENTH Air Force under Major General St. Clair Streett, (AC), USA, with headquarters at Noemfoor until about November 1st when they would move to Morotai.\*\*

(3) Northern Solomons Air Group (TG 70.9) under Major General R.J. Mitchell, USMC, with headquarters at Torokina in Southern Bougainville.

(4) Royal Australian Air Force Command under Air Vice Marshal W.D. Bostock, RAAF, with headquarters at Brisbane.

(5) Naval Air Force, SEVENTH Fleet (TF 73) under Rear Admiral F.D. Wagner, USN, embarked in CURRITUCK (AV-7) at Manus.

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\* Letter from Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Schools Mine Warfare, Yorktown, Virginia, Serial 820, undated, but probably June 7th, 1952, to President, Naval War College.

\*\* Letter of Instructions No. 1, Headquarters, 13th Air Force, October 1st, 1944.



On October 17th, Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, numbered 2889 aircraft of various types. (Tables 1-5 incl.)

The capabilities of these aircraft varied considerably and therefore will be considered under their two basic employments; (a) those employed for tactical support and defense in the objective area and consisting generally of fighter and light and medium bomber types, and (b) those employed for long-range bombing, or for search and reconnaissance and consisting generally of patrol planes and long-range bombers.

Under Employment (a) there were available:

(1) As fighters, the P-38, P-40 and P-47. Of these the P-38 had the greatest range. It had a maximum combat radius with external tanks of 586 miles.\*

(2) As medium bombers, the B-25, which was at Morotai, had an estimated bombing radius of 391 miles, while the A-20 had an estimated bombing radius of 274 miles.\*

Under Employment (b) there were available:

(1) As long-range bombers and search planes, Army Air Force B-24's and Navy PB4Y-1's, which latter was the Navy version of the B-24. These planes had a normal cruising radius of 1000 miles, which, in the case of the PB4Y-1, could be extended to 1100 miles, its extreme radius. When these planes were employed on bombing missions this radius, in view of the added bomb load, was reduced in general to about 825 miles.\*\* Both the B-24 and the PB4Y-1 were heavily armed with twelve .50 caliber guns and were well protected with armor and self-sealing tanks.\*\*\*

(2) As long-range bombers and search planes of lesser range capabilities than b(1) above, Navy PBY-5's and PV-1's, also Army Air Force B-25's. The PBY-5's, which were seaplanes, were slow (about 125 knots),\*\*\*\* had a cruising radius of 700 miles and were somewhat weakly armed with two .50 caliber and three .30 caliber guns. However, they were well protected with armor and self-sealing tanks.\*

The PV-1 was about twenty knots faster, and the B-25 was about forty knots faster than the PBY-5. Both the PV-1 and the B-25 had a normal cruising radius of about 600 miles, were heavily armed and were well protected with armor and self-sealing tanks. The PV-1 was armed

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\* Comparative Performances and Characteristics, Representative Enemy and Allied Aircraft, TAIC Manual No. 2, October 1944.

\*\* Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC; Leyte Campaign.

\*\*\* Airplane Characteristics published by Naval War College, July 1944.

\*\*\*\* Airplane Characteristics published by Naval War College, June 1942.



with seven .50 caliber and two .30 caliber guns; the B-25 with nine .50 caliber.\*

All of these types were equipped with radar. Of the Navy Patrol aircraft the PB4Y-1 and PBM-3 types had the best radar equipment with an average range expectancy on a medium sized ship of about 40-45 miles.\*\* The PV-1 and PB4Y-5 types were equipped with radar with an expectancy on a similar target of about 32-35 miles.\*\* Of the Army Air Force types the radar of the B-24 had a maximum reliable range on a medium sized ship of about 40 miles while that of the B-25 was about 30 miles.\*\*\*

On October 4th, the various air bases on Morotai commenced becoming operational and therefore, aircraft units were promptly moved into those bases which were ready. The first squadron to be moved into Morotai was from the EIGHTH Fighter Group, which was the only complete air group on Morotai at the time of the Allied attack on Suluan Island, 0719 October 17th. This squadron arrived on October 4th. It was followed on October 5th by a Night Fighter Squadron from the same group.\*\*\*\* However, arrangements were then underway to receive (a) the three Navy squadrons - VPB's 101, 115 (composed of PB4Y-1's) and 146 (composed of PV-1's) - which were scheduled to arrive from Biak on the following day, October 18th, (b) the THIRTY-FIFTH Fighter Group (P-47's) and the THIRTY-EIGHTH Bomb Group (B-25's) which had commenced arriving on October 17th but which did not complete their movements until after October 21st and (c) the FIFTH Bomb Group (B-24's) and the 307th Bomb Group (B-24's) which were scheduled to arrive shortly from Noemfoor, but for which shipping arrangements were not made until the last week in October.\*\*\*\*\*

In addition to Morotai, which was 540 miles from Leyte, Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC had available only three other bases within 1000 miles of Leyte:

Sansapor	- 800 miles
Noemfoor	- 930 miles
Biak	- 980 miles

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\* Comparative Performance and Characteristics, Representative Enemy and Allied Aircraft, TAIC Manual No. 2, October 1944.

\*\* Aero 55(c), BuAer, December 1945.

\*\*\* Chief, Bureau Aeronautics Letters, Serial 19112, February 27th, 1951, and Serial 57666, June 12th, 1951 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\*\* Research Studies Institute, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, First Endorsement, December 20th, 1951 on President, Naval War College Letter, November 28th, 1951.

\*\*\*\*\* Headquarters, Allied Air Force, SOWESPAC, Operations Report No. 24, October 21st-27th, 1944.



From the foregoing, it is clear that with the air bases available to him, Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, could not provide air defense or close air support in the objective area before the establishment of air bases in or closer to that area. That Commander Allied Air Forces, was fully aware of this fact is shown from his comments made on the campaign plan as early as July 1944:

"The distance between Sansapor, Morotai, Sarangani (a small island 20 miles south of Mindanao) and Leyte all have the common factor of being too great for effective air support from one to the other. It seems to me that the majority of our problems can be solved by relying on land-based aviation and placing it in the proper position to cover all operations."\*

He then recommended the establishment of bases at Talaud, Sarangani, and the Del Monte area of Mindanao in order to place his land-based aircraft in position to support the Leyte operation.\*

He further stated that he "considered it unwise to rely on carrier units completely accomplishing required support" because, among other reasons, "enemy air, surface, and subsurface action and the physical limitations of carriers creates a constant uncertainty in the maintenance of this type of cover."\*

Why Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, persisted in the belief that carrier operations, at least against the Japanese held islands, were uncertain in their ability to maintain required support is not understood. Such ideas were not in accordance with the Navy's concepts and were not in accordance with the facts established through the several preceding years of the Pacific war. The Navy had confidence at this time that landing operations could be entirely supported by carrier-based aircraft and had so demonstrated in numerous previous operations in the Pacific of which the most notable was the seizure of the Marianas in June 1944 and the most recent, the seizure of Pelelieu, Anguar and Ulithi in September of the same year.

That COMSOWESPAC supported this Navy view seems clear, for, as has been pointed out earlier, he agreed on September 14th and 15th to COMTHIRDFLT's recommendations to proceed with the Leyte operation two months ahead of time.\*\* In doing this, he, of course, realized fully that his close air support would necessarily be supplied entirely by

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\* Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Letter July 11th, 1944 to COMSOWESPAC contained in Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC Leyte Campaign, June 1945, page 23.

\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch CX 17697, September 14th, 1944 to Joint Chiefs of Staff and CINCPAC; also COMSOWESPAC Dispatch C 17744, September 15th, 1944 to Joint Chiefs of Staff.



carrier-based aircraft until such time as airfields could be made available in the objective area.

It should be noted here that the plan for airfield construction called for Tacloban Field to be ready by October 25th with parking area for two fighter groups and one night fighter squadron and for a strip at Dulag with thirty-six hardstands by November 4th.\*

(1) FIFTH Air Force (Table 1)

The FIFTH Air Force was designated by Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC as the Air Assault Force.\* In addition to this, and augmented by the THIRTEENTH Air Force, it was to continue its neutralizing attacks against the by-passed areas of Borneo, New Guinea and Celebes and was to utilize its Morotai based P-38 aircraft in attacks against targets in Mindanao.\*\* These operations were to continue until such time as the CG, FIFTH Air Force was able to move his air forces into the Leyte area at which time the CG, THIRTEENTH Air Force would assume the above neutralizing duties.

Consonant with the availability of facilities, CG, FIFTH Air Force planned to establish at Leyte two P-38 fighter groups and one night fighter squadron by October 25th, to be followed by additional units including one medium bomb group plus one squadron, and three Navy tender-based PBY squadrons by November 4th.\*\*\*

However, due to unforeseen circumstances the airfield construction schedule could not be maintained.

"The condition of the fields when seized, poor soil, torrential rains, inadequate road nets, and the scarcity of construction materials were the principal factors which necessitated making a new construction schedule."\*\*\*\* The Tacloban strip was actually completed to 5000 feet on October 31st with no dispersals; by November 4th only 600 feet had been subgraded at Dulag.\*\*\*\*\*

As a result of the delay, the first movement of land-based aircraft into the objective area did not take place until October 27th

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\* Headquarters, Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Instructions No. 71, September 24th, 1944.

\*\* Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Report No. 23, October 14th-20th, 1944.

\*\*\* CG, FIFTH Air Force Operations Instructions No. 6, September 24th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC, Leyte Campaign, June 1945, Section VII, page 269.

\*\*\*\*\* Ibid, Annex VII, page 443.



TABLE I  
ALLIED AIR FORCES SOWESPAC  
17 October, 1944

FIFTH Air Force

Base	VF						VF (N)	VB (L)	VB (M)	VB (H)	Reconnaissance				TC	TOTAL
	P38	Spit	P40	P47	B/F	P40					F5	F7	L5	P40		
Morotai	Avail	52			39		6		27							144
	Oper	41			35		5	24	24							122
Noemfoor	Avail				177			77								254
	Oper				153			66								219
Biak	Avail	137			26		24		86	113			23	16	66	564
	Oper	92			24		16		69	86			22	15	58	448
Wakde	Avail						5									5
	Oper						4									4
Hollandia	Avail							133							93	226
	Oper							115							76	191
Darwin	Avail									51						51
	Oper									49						49
Nadzab	Avail														112	112
	Oper														95	95
FIFTH A.F.	Avail	189			242		35	210	113	164			43	16	271	1356
TOTALS	Oper	133			212		25	181	93	135			39	15	229	1128

Data for this table was obtained from the following sources:

- (1) Letter from Director, Historical Division, Air University Library, February 20th, 1951
- (2) Air Evaluation Board, Leyte Campaign, June 1945
- (3) 54th Troop Carrier Wing Operations Summary No. 1, October 12th, 1944
- (4) GHQ, SOWESPAC, G-3 Journal, October 1944
- (5) Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC Operations Report No. 23, October 14th-20th, 1944.





when thirty-four P-38's of the FORTY-NINTH Fighter Group arrived from Morotai, of which one crashed on landing. By October 30th only twenty P-38's remained available at Leyte; on October 31st these were augmented by forty more P-38's and six P-61 night fighters from Morotai.\*

Inasmuch as the movement of land-based air into the objective area did not commence until after the time of the three naval actions under consideration, land-based air operations from Leyte had no effect on the Battle for Leyte Gulf and will not be considered further in this study.

The plan for employment of these units at Leyte did, however, have a possible effect on the operation of long-range, land-based aircraft from established Northern New Guinea bases.

As has been indicated, Morotai was the only base available from which long-range aircraft could operate beyond Leyte, i.e., to the north and west of the objective area. It was also the only base from which short-range aircraft, fighters and light and medium bombers, could be staged into Leyte. This latter requirement necessitated the presence of 162 aircraft at Morotai ready to fly in to Leyte by October 25th. Additional aircraft were needed to provide local air defense. At that time there were three strips on Morotai, but only a total of sixty-three dispersals.\*\* It would appear that congestion at Morotai accounted for the "difficulties of basing a sufficient number of heavy bombers at Morotai"\*\*\* rather than the fact that "Morotai (was) not developed sufficiently to be used by B-24's except in emergency."\*\*\*\* Actually, two squadrons of Navy PB4Y aircraft, the Navy designation of the B-24, had been conducting search operations from Morotai from October 19th.

On October 4th, Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, had added to the mission of CG, FIFTH Air Force: "Commencing D-10, maintain neutralization of hostile air forces and shipping in the Mindanao area south of 08°-45'N. When heavy bombers are established on Morotai, extend neutralization to the Visayan area, exclusive of Leyte and Samar. Upon departure of escort carriers, extend neutralization to include Leyte and Samar."\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC, Leyte Campaign, June 1945, Section II.

\*\* Headquarters, Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC Operations, Report No. 24, October 21st-27th, 1944.

\*\*\* Extract from Special Report on the Battle of the Philippine waters, A-3, FEAF; also Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC, Leyte Campaign, June 1945, page 282.

\*\*\*\* Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC, Leyte Campaign, June 1945, page 18.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Revised Operations Instructions No. 71/1, October 4th, 1944.



The inability of the CG, FIFTH Air Force to effect complete neutralization of the Visayan area early in the campaign was due in part (a) to a lack of sufficient bases within range and (b) to the congestion of bases by aircraft awaiting transfer to Leyte. In addition, the Morotai bases were employed by certain B-24's which were staged into that area from Noemfoor on October 24th for attacks on the Japanese Southern Force on October 25th and 26th.\* These operations, however, which will be discussed later were only staging operations with all ground support provided by the ground crews at Noemfoor. The actual transfer of these B-24 units to Morotai was not accomplished until some time during the last week in October, or perhaps even later.

This lack of bases to permit proper initial positioning of the land-based air units had, in effect, been accepted by COMSOWESPAC as an initial condition but it seems clear that he expected early employment of the Leyte fields by Allied aircraft. The reason that this did not occur seems to have been due, in part, to faulty intelligence and, in part, to unusual weather. Prior to the landing, Allied Intelligence indicated that the Tacloban Strip was an all-weather strip.\*\* However, this was discovered to be untrue for "the passage of three typhoons in the period October 17th to November 8th, with their attendant copious rainfalls, caused a breakdown in construction plans and the inundation of proposed and existing airdrome sites."\*\* Until these conditions could be at least partially rectified, not only were land-based aircraft prevented from operating in the objective area, but, also, long-range aircraft, other than reconnaissance aircraft, were prevented from using Morotai for more than staging purposes; thus seriously injuring the ability of the CG, FIFTH Air Force to neutralize vital areas north and west of Leyte.

## (2) THIRTEENTH Air Force (Table 2)

The THIRTEENTH Air Force was designated as a supporting air force. Its primary task was support of the operations of the FIFTH Air Force as requested by the CG, FIFTH Air Force.\*\*\* It was not directly involved in the Battle for Leyte Gulf but rather in relieving the FIFTH Air Force of responsibilities in the rear areas as that Air Force moved into the objective area. Consequently, its operations will be dropped from further treatment in this analysis.

## (3) Northern Solomons Air Group (Table 3)

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- \* Headquarters, Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Report No. 24, October 21st-27th, 1944.
  - \*\* Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC, Leyte Campaign, June 1945, page 261.
  - \*\*\* Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Instructions No. 71, September 24th, 1944.



TABLE 2  
 ALLIED AIR FORCES SOWESPAC  
 17 October, 1944

THIRTEENTH Air Force

Base	VF					VF (N)	VB (L)	VB (M)	VB (H)	Reconnaissance					TOTAL	
	P38	Spit	P40	P47	B/F					F5	F7	L5	P40	B25		C47
Sansapor	Avail	121				6		83								210
	Oper	92				5		66								163
Noemfoor	Avail					5			89							94
	Oper					4			66							70
Manus	Avail														48	48
	Oper														41	41
THIRTEENTH Air Force	Avail					11		83	89						48	352
	Oper					9		66	66						41	274

Data for this table was obtained from the following sources:

- (1) Letter from Director, Historical Division, Air University Library, February 20th, 1951.
- (2) Air Evaluation Board, Leyte Campaign, June 1945.
- (3) GHQ, SOWESPAC, G-3 Journal, October 1944.
- (4) Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Report No. 23, October 14th-20th, 1944
- (5) 13th AAF Letter of Instructions No. 1, October 1st, 1944.

TABLE 3  
 ALLIED AIR FORCES SOWESPAC  
 17 October, 1944

Aircraft - Northern Solomons

Base	VF		VSB	VB	VPB	VR	PHOTO	VU	TOTAL
	F4U	FG-1							
Admiralties		14	15		9	6		1	45
Emirau	42	19	41	22	31	2			157
Green	40		43	11		17			111
Bougainville	100		44				5	1	182
Munda			21	13	Treas I 1				35
Aircraft Northern Solomons TOTALS	182	19	14 164	46	40	26	5	1	530

Data for this table was obtained from the following sources:

(1) War Diary, COMAIRNORSOLS, October 17th, 1944.

NOTE:

Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC Operations Instructions No. 71, Annex 8, September 24th, 1944 gave a projected availability for October 17th as follows:

VF - 172  
 VB/VSB - 138  
 VR - 24



TABLE 4  
 ALLIED AIR FORCES SOWESPAC  
 17 October, 1944

RAAF Command

Base	VF						VB (L)		VP		VB (H)	VB (M)	TOTAL
	P38	Spit	P40	P47	S/F	B'RANG	A20	B'FORT	PBY	WALRUS			
Noemfoor			150		18		18						186
Darwin		125			18	18					12	36	209
Milne Bay							18						18
Madang						18							18
Higgins							18						18
Merauke			25										25
Cape Gloucester						6							6
Aitape								36					36
Cairns									24				24
Bowen										18			18
Vivigani								6					6
RAAFFC TOTALS		125	175		36	42	18	78	24	18	12	36	564

Data for this table was obtained from the following sources:

- (1) GHQ, SOWESPAC, G-3 Journal, October 1944.
- (2) 13th USAAF Letter of Instructions No. 2, October 6th, 1944.
- (3) Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Report No. 23, October 14th-20th, 1944.
- (4) Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Instructions No. 71, September 24th, 1944.

NOTE:

Information available indicates the number and type of RAAFCC squadrons.

The figures in this table are based on the following aircraft squadron complements:

B/F and B'rang - 18  
 all other

VF - 25  
 VB(L) - 18  
 VP, VB(M), VB(N) - 12





## (4) Royal Australian Air Force Command (Table 4)

These two components of the Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, were concerned with operations in the rear areas to protect existing bases and destroy enemy forces in by-passed areas.\* Except for their part in the Allied plan for land-based air reconnaissance which is discussed in a later section they took no part in the Battle for Leyte Gulf and will be dropped from further discussion.

## (5) Naval Air Force, SEVENTH Fleet (TF 73) (Table 5)

Commander Naval Air Force, SEVENTH Fleet (CTF 73) was directed by COMSEVENTHFLT to "conduct supporting operations under control of Commander Allied Air Force" \*\* who in turn directed him to "release to the operational control of the FIFTH Air Force all shore and tender-based aircraft operating within the FIFTH Air Force Areas of Responsibility." \* In practice some of the units operated under the CG, FIFTH Air Force, while others received their orders from CTF 73. Thus the Commander Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN, at Morotai, received direct daily orders from the CG, FIFTH Air Force to carry out the effective search plan using the PB4Y-1 aircraft of VPB 101 and 115, \*\*\* while other naval air units in the area operated under CTF 73 orders. Commander Allied Air Forces later stated: "There were times during the Leyte Campaign....when Admiral Wagner received instructions direct from my headquarters for some of his units, while others had been released to the control of the Commanding General of the FIFTH or THIRTEENTH Air Forces." \*\*\*\*

In addition to the planned utilization of land-based aircraft of Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, for support and defense in the objective area and for neutralization and isolation of the battlefield, there were plans for deployment of naval aircraft units to provide extended search and reconnaissance in support of the operation.

In addition to the movement of land-based search units from Mios Woendi (Biak) to Morotai, the plan provided for the movement into Leyte of tender-based units at the earliest possible time. To support these units two small tenders (AVP class) were designated. At 0719, October 17th, SAN CARLOS (AVP 51) with CFAW-10 embarked was enroute Leyte in company with CTG 77.2. HALF MOON (AVP 26) was at Palau scheduled to

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\* Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Instructions No. 71, September 24th, 1944.

\*\* Commander Allied Naval Forces, SOWESPAC, Operation Plan 12-44.

\*\*\* CG, FIFTH Air Force Fragmentary Field Orders, October 1944.

\*\*\*\* General G.C. Kenney, USAF Letter, March 2nd, 1951, to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head of World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.



depart for Leyte on October 18th in company with CTG 70.1. Two PBY-5 squadrons (VPB 33 and VPB 34) were at Mios Woendi awaiting call to Leyte when so directed by CTF 77. These units were to conduct day and night searches, night bombing missions, and rescue operations as directed by the CG, FIFTH Air Force.\*

One Navy PV squadron, VPB 130, was also designated to move into Leyte about November 4th (D/15) to conduct offensive reconnaissance missions as directed by CG, FIFTH Air Force.\*

This planned employment of search aircraft appears sound. It placed the long-range PB4Y's in the most advanced position available to Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, in order to extend their range to the maximum. Likewise the employment of tender-based units in Leyte Gulf would permit further extension of searches and demonstrates the correct utilization of this type of aircraft. The actual employment of these aircraft in search operations will be considered in a subsequent section.

(2) Pacific Ocean Area (Plate II)

There were two land and tender-based air commands operating in the Central Pacific in support of the Leyte Campaign. These were:

- (a) The Shore-Based Air Force, Forward Area, Central Pacific (TF 59), commanded by the CG, SEVENTH Air Force, Major General W.H. Hale (AC) USA, and,
- (b) The Search, Reconnaissance and Photographic Command (TG 30.5), commanded by the Commander Fleet Air Wing ONE (CFAW-1), Commodore D. Ketchem, USN.

(a) Shore-Based Air Force, Forward Area, Central Pacific (TF 59) (Table 6)

This force, which had its headquarters at Saipan, was composed of those Army Air Force and Marine Air Units which were operating in the Forward Area. Its units were based on Saipan, Tinian, Guam and Palau. Its mission was to attack enemy forces and bases, and defend Allied bases in order to consolidate and extend the U.S. position in the Central Pacific.\*\*

The Shore-Based Air Force, Forward Area, was a component of the Forward Area, Central Pacific Task Force (TF 57), commanded by Commander Task Force FIFTY-SEVEN, Vice Admiral J.H. Hoover, USN. It had been placed under Commander Western Pacific Task Forces by CINCPAC prior to

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\* COMAIRSEVENTHFLT Operation Plan 8-44, October 15th, 1944.  
 \*\* COMFWDAREA, CENPAC Operation Plan 7-44, Serial 001477, October 1st, 1944.



TABLE 5  
ALLIED AIR FORCES SOWESPAC  
17 October, 1944

Naval Air Force  
SEVENTH Fleet

Base		VP			TOTAL	TENDERS*	
		PBY	PB4Y	PV		AV	AVP
Morotai	Avail	20			1	2	
	Oper	14					
Biak	Avail	27	24	12			
	Oper	19	17	12			
Hollandia	Avail	4				1	
	Oper	3					
Manus	Avail			**	1		
	Oper			**			
Palau	Avail					1	
	Oper						
En route Leyte with TG 77.2	Avail					1	
	Oper						
Naval Air Force SEVENTH Fleet TOTALS	Avail	51	24	12	2	5	
	Oper	36	17	12			

\* Tenders were at Morotai, TANGIER (AV), ORCA (AVP), SAN PABLO (AVP); at Manus, CURRITUCK (AV) at Hollandia, HERON (AVP); at Palau, HALF MOON (AVP), en route Leyte, SAN CARLOS (AVP).

\*\* 15 PV en route from Kaneohe Oahu not included.

Data for this table was obtained from the following sources:

- (1) War Diary COMFAIRWING 17, October 1944.
- (2) War Diaries VPB 11, 29, 33, 34, 52, 101, 115, 146, October 1944.
- (3) War Diaries TANGIER, SAN PABLO, ORCA, HERON, October 1944.
- (4) War Diary COMAIRSEVENTHFLT, October 1944.

TABLE 6  
 SHORE-BASED AIR FORCE, FORWARD AREA, CENPAC (TF 59)  
 17 October, 1944

Base	VF			VF(N)		VTB	VB(H)	VR	VO	PHOTO RECCO	TOTAL
	P47	F4U	FG	F6F(N)	P61						
Saipan	82				6		109		10	4	211
Tinian						20					20
Guam		82		14		20		16	10		142
Peleliu			42	13		24				3	82
Class TOTALS	82	82	42	27	6	64	109	16	20	7	455
Type TOTALS		206			33	64	109	16	20	7	

Data for this table was obtained from the following sources:  
 (1) War Diary, Commander Forward Area, Central Pacific (CTF 57), October 1944.  
 (2) War Diaries, Marine Air Groups 11, 21, October 1944.  
 (3) War Diary, 2nd Marine Air Wing, October 1944.  
 (4) War Diary, Island Commander, Guam, October 1944.  
 (5) War Diary, 4th Marine Base Defense Air Wing, October 1944.  
 (6) War Diary, Garrison Air Force, Western Carolines (TG 59.6), October 1944.  
 (7) War Diaries, VMF 114, 122, 216, 217, 225, 321; VMTB 131, 134, 242; VMF(N) 541, VMR 253, 952, October 1944.



the Palau operation. It remained in that relation until October 23rd when it reverted to the direct command of CINCPAC. This reversion was based on previously determined plans,\* and was not a result of the changing situation.

During the preliminary actions preceding the Battle for Leyte Gulf, Commander Forward Area, Central Pacific, (CTF 57) was directed by COMTHIRDFLT to accomplish two tasks:\*\*

(a) On October 15th and again on October 18th he was directed to neutralize enemy air activity at Yap to prevent the enemy from observing the THIRD Fleet base at Ulithi.

(b) On October 16th he was directed to make maximum air effort against the Bonins to interdict enemy air operations in that area.

In compliance with these directives the Bonins were bombed by fifty-nine B-24's during the period October 15th-19th. Yap was attacked by four B-24's as well as Marine F4U's during the same period.\*\*\*

At 0719, October 17th, the Shore-Based Air Force, Central Pacific, had a total of 455 aircraft. The types and locations of the aircraft were as indicated in Table 6.

Of the bases available to the command, only the newly acquired Peleliu base was within effective striking range of Leyte, and this effective striking range applied to the B-24's only. All other aircraft were under range. Peleliu was 580 miles from the Leyte area and was therefore only about half the distance from the Marianas to Leyte. However, its airfield at this time was suitable for small aircraft only, and was therefore in use by types designed to provide air defense, air support of the military operations underway and local air patrols, rather than by heavy bombers. In order to compensate for this inadequacy, a heavy bomber field was under construction on Angaur, another island of the Palau group which was six miles south of Peleliu. As soon as this field was ready, it was planned to move the 494th Bomb Group (H) from Saipan to Angaur in order to conduct neutralization operations in the Bicol area of the Philippines.\*\*\*\*

In line with this plan, two squadrons of the 494th Bomb Group arrived at Angaur on October 20th, and twenty-eight B-24's by October 24th.

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\* Letter of Instructions, Serial 00096, August 18th, 1944, from CINCPAC to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\* War Diaries, COMTHIRDFLT and CTF 57, October 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary, CINCPAC, October 1944.

\*\*\*\* Air Evaluation Board, SOWESPAC, Leyte Campaign, June 1945, and CANF, SOWESPAC, Operation Plan 13-44, Annex "B".

On October 25th these aircraft were alerted by CTF 59 for possible action against enemy fleet units.\* Although the enemy was well within range and threatening other Allied forces, none of these aircraft were directed to attack units of the central Japanese force. This matter will be commented on later under the actions on October 25th. Except for this, inasmuch as none of the aircraft of the Shore-Based Air Force, Central Pacific, took part in the Battle for Leyte Gulf, they will be dropped from further discussion.

(b) Search, Reconnaissance and Photographic Command (TG 30.5), (Table 7).

On October 2nd, under authority of CINCPOA,\*\* COMTHIRDFLT removed the Navy land and tender-based aircraft from TF 59 and formed it into a new task group, TG 30.5. He operated this group directly during the Leyte operation, and assigned it the tasks "to conduct long-range search.....and to intercept and destroy enemy search aircraft in vicinity of Task Force 38 on October 8th and 9th, and again on October 11th as practicable."\*\*\*

At 0719, October 17th, the Task Group Commander was embarked in the HAMLIN (AV-15) anchored at Ulithi. He had available the squadrons and tenders of Fleet Air Wing ONE, a total of 191 patrol planes, which were distributed as indicated in Table 7.

Of the types of patrol planes available two were seaplanes, the PBM-3 and PB2Y-3; two were landplanes, the PB4Y-1 and PV-1; and one was amphibian, the PBY-5A.

The seaplanes were relatively slow. The PBY's had weak defensive armament consisting of two .50 calibre and three .30 calibre guns. The PBM's and PB2Y's were better armed than the PBY's and had eight .50 calibre guns.\*\*\*\* All three seaplanes were well protected with self-sealing fuel tanks. The practical patrol radii were as follows: PBY-700 miles, PB2Y and PBM-800 miles.

The characteristics of the two landplane types have been discussed previously under land and tender-based aircraft SOWESPAC area; these same types also operated in the Central Pacific area.

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\* War Diary, Commander Garrison Air Force, Western Carolines, October 1944.

\*\* CINCPOA, Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT, Operation Order 21-44, Dispatch 031600, October 1944, also Action Report COMFAIRWING ONE, September 10th-October 15th, 1944, Serial 0053, December 8th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Comparative Performance and Characteristics, Representative Enemy and Allied Aircraft, TAIC Manual No. 2, October 1944.



TABLE 7  
SEARCH, RECONNAISSANCE AND PHOTOGRAPHIC COMMAND (TG 30.5) (FAW-1)  
17 October, 1944

	PBM	PBY5A	PB2Y	PB4Y	PV	TOTAL	TENDERS	
							AV	AVP
Kossol Passage	46					46	2	2
Saipan	17		16			33	1	2
Tinian				45	31	76		
Ulithi	13					13	1	2
Ebeye		PBY5 2	4			6		
Eniwetok				PB4Y-1P 5		5		
Guam				PB4Y-1P 3		3		
Majuro		* 14				14		
TOTALS	71	16	20	53	31	196	4	6

\* Includes detachments at Saipan, Guam, Tarawa, Makin, and Roi for Search and Rescue duties.

Tenders were at Kossol Passage, CHANDELEUR (AV), POCOMOKE (AV), MACKINAC (AVP), YAKUTAT (AVP): at Saipan, KENNETH WHITING (AV), COOS BAY (AVP), SHELIKOF (AVP); at Ulithi, HAMLIN (AV), CASCO (AVP), ONSLOW (AVP).

Data for this table was obtained from the following sources:

- (1) War Diaries, VPB 102, 116, 117, 4, 16, 17, 18, 21, 24, 150, 151, 202, 216, VD-4, VH-1.
- (2) Action Report, Commander Fleet Air Wing ONE, September 10th-October 15th, 1944, Serial 0053, February 8th, 1944.
- (3) War Diaries, MACKINAC, KENNETH WHITING, HAMLIN, CHANDELEUR, COOS BAY, ONSLOW, SHELIKOF, YAKUTAT, CASCO, October 1944.





CTG 30.5's most advanced bases toward the Empire were at Tinian and Saipan. These bases were 1260 miles from Honshu, 1230 miles from Okinawa, and 1390 miles from Luzon. An additional base, Kossol Passage, Palau, which was 795 miles southwest of Saipan, 1170 miles south southeast of Okinawa, and 480 miles east of the Mindanao coast, was available as a seaplane base. The searches made by CTG 30.5 will be discussed under "Allied Search and Reconnaissance."

As has been noted, CTG 30.5 had been assigned, in addition to his search task, a protection objective. He was directed to intercept and destroy enemy search aircraft in the vicinity of TF 38 in order to protect that force. He accomplished this as follows: From Patrol Squadron 116 based at Tinian he launched, in addition to the regular search aircraft, three PB4Y-1 planes on October 8th, and five PB4Y-1 planes on October 9th. These aircraft, patrolling in the vicinity of TF 38, made no contacts with enemy aircraft. However, on October 9th, they discovered and unsuccessfully attacked an enemy picket boat in the general vicinity of TF 38's track,\* and on October 10th they sank this picket boat by an attack made by four patrol planes from Patrol Squadrons 102 and 116. In addition, in order to increase protection to TF 38, he increased the regular patrols of Patrol Squadrons 102, 116, and 117 from Tinian, in some cases to 1150 miles, which was an extreme range for PB4Y-1 aircraft. One of these patrols from Patrol Squadron 102 shot down an enemy patrol plane on October 9th some 225 miles northeast of TF 38. The regular patrols of Patrol Squadron 116 shot down two more enemy patrol planes on October 11th.\*\* Whether or not special screening aircraft were launched on October 11th is not known; on that day TF 38 fueled approximately 1050 miles west northwest of Tinian.

In addition to these flights, the patrol plane (PBM) searches from Palau, which were normally limited to a radius of 600 miles, were extended to 775 miles on October 8th to provide additional cover for TF 38, which, at noon on that day, was bearing  $017^{\circ}(T)$ , distant 660 miles from Palau. The additional area swept by this extended search was to the westward of TF 38. On the following day (October 9th) three of these PBM searches were extended to give a three-hour patrol along a line between Latitude  $17^{\circ}-00'N$ ; Longitude  $130^{\circ}-00'E$ , and Latitude  $19^{\circ}-00'N$ ; Longitude  $133^{\circ}-00'E$ \*\*\* This line ran roughly NE-SW with its northeast end approximately 170 miles southwest of TF 38, and was nearly perpendicular to TF 38's track. Why this patrol line was so chosen is not understood for does it not appear that the principal danger to TF 38, as viewed from Palau, was from enemy search planes operating out of Luzon? In such case should not the patrol line, to cover adequately the northwesterly movement of TF 38,

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\* War Diary, COMTHIRDFLT, October 9th, 1944.

\*\* War Diaries, VPB 116 and VPB 102, October 9th and 10th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary, VPB 216, October 1944.



have been in a NW-SE line rather than in a NE-SW line? Naturally, in view of this strange orientation, the Palau extended patrol afforded slight, if any, protection to TF 38. These searches made no contacts during this period.

It seems probable that the Commanding Officer VPB 216, who was conducting these searches, was not informed concerning the movements of TF 38 at this time since he was not on the distribution list for CTF 38's OpPlan. This points out the fact that a commander who orders a subordinate to accomplish a task should insure that said subordinate is provided with whatever information appears necessary for the proper accomplishment of the task, and it further points out the fact that any subordinate commander, who is given such an assignment should make every effort to obtain whatever information he considers necessary. Whether or not Commanding Officer VPB 216 endeavored to obtain such information is not known.

This utilization of land-based aircraft to screen a carrier force against detection by enemy land-based air reconnaissance is sound. However, care must be exercised that the screen operate similarly to regular patrols lest the enemy be alerted to unusual activity in the area. Where practicable regular patrols should already be in the area, and should show the same aggressive intent to shoot down enemy patrols as do the screening aircraft. The Japanese presumably had, at this time, only limited information regarding American air reconnaissance to the north and west of the Marianas, and evidently considered it unimportant because, when one of their patrol planes was shot down by Patrol Squadron 102 on October 9th, they did not realize that this had been accomplished by an American patrol plane, and consequently alerted the naval units in the Nansei Shoto and on Kyushu Island against a possible attack by a carrier task force.\*

The use of long-range aircraft as a screen to protect surface forces against detection is recognized in current tactical instructions. The present objectives of an anti-reconnaissance airborne screen are delineated as: (1) aggressive: destruction of enemy picket boats and/or reconnaissance aircraft in the vicinity of prospective surface operations; (2) information: detection of enemy long-range air strikes.\*\*

On October 13th CTG 30.5 was directed by COMTHIRDFLT to assume an additional task, that of providing air coverage for TG 30.2, which had

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104; also Detailed Action Report Oruku (on Okinawa) Detachment 901st Naval Air Group October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 160369, NA 12366.

\*\* Long-Range Air Reconnaissance and Scouting Instructions, United States Fleets (USF-11) 1946, paras, 750 and 751.



TABLE 8  
 FOURTEENTH AIR FORCE CHINA  
 17 October, 1944

TOTALS	VF				VF (N)	VB (M)		VB (H)			RECCO			TC	TOTAL Aircraft	
	P40	P38	P51	P47		Tot	B24	B25	LAB B24	Tot	F5	P40	P51			Tot
	161	19	82	49		311	4	71	20	48	25	12	8			45
Avail	147	17	72	42	278	4	50	23	20	43	21	11	7	39	30	444
Oper	147	17	72	42	278	4	50	23	20	43	21	11	7	39	30	444
TOTALS	161	19	82	49	311	4	71	20	48	25	12	8	45	33	512	512

FOURTEENTH AIR FORCE CHINA

(NOT COMMITTED TO GROUND DEFENSE)

TOTALS	VF				VF (M)	VB (H)		TOTAL Aircraft
	P40	P38	P51	Tot		LAB B24	Tot	
	102	19	44	165		23	48	
Avail	72	17	37	126	20	43	189	
Oper	72	17	37	126	20	43	189	
TOTALS	102	19 <td>44</td> <td>165</td> <td>23</td> <td>48</td> <td>236</td>	44	165	23	48	236	

Data for these tables was obtained from the following sources:

- (1) AAF Form 34, Weekly Status and Operations Report forwarded by Director, Library Division, Air University, November 8th, 1950.
- (2) AAF Form 34, Weekly Status and Operations Report forwarded by Director, Library Division, Air University, February 23rd, 1951.





been ordered to depart Saipan 0100, October 14th and rendezvous with TG 30.3 on October 16th.\* TG 30.3 was then retiring with the damaged CANBERRA from off Formosa toward Ulithi. CTG 30.5 also received orders to cover the movement of TG 30.3.\*\* Actually, except for a single PB4Y flight on October 16th, which provided some coverage at the extreme range of 1150 miles from its base at Tinian,\*\*\* TG 30.3 did not receive such cover until it came within range of Palau-based PBM aircraft on October 21st. This was because all other Allied air bases were out of effective range at the time.

### (3) China-Burma-India Area (Plate II)

There were two land-based air commands operating in support of the Philippine Campaign from the China-Burma-India Theater:

- (a) FOURTEENTH Air Force, commanded by Major General Claire L. Chennault, (AC), USA.
- (b) TWENTIETH Bomber Command, commanded by Major General Curtis L. LeMay (AC), USA.

#### (a) FOURTEENTH Air Force (Table 8)

This command comprised the USAAF units, plus one Chinese-American composite Wing based in China. It operated under CG, U.S. Army Forces, CBI.\*\*\*\* Its primary task was to support Chinese ground operations against the Japanese, and to this task all but four of its air groups were committed. The latter four air groups were available to support the operations of COMSOWESPAC. These air groups were one heavy bomb group (B-24), one medium bomb group, and two fighter groups.

The availability of bases for operations of the FOURTEENTH Air Force in support of KING II was in doubt at the time of the formulation of plans. As late as September 23rd there had to be two plans, depending on whether or not the East China bases at Kweilin and Liuchow had been taken by the advancing Japanese. If these bases were available, CG, U.S. Army Forces, CBI, planned to:\*\*\*\*\*

(1) Employ one heavy bomber group against shipping and enemy airfields in the Formosa area, although the attacks on airfields would be restricted by lack of effective fighter cover at that range.

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\* War Diary, PENSACOLA, October 13th, 1944.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT, Dispatch 131804, October 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary, VPB 102, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* General Joseph W. Stilwell, USA.

\*\*\*\*\* Radio, CG, USAFCHI(Sultan) Dispatch CRX 14575, September 23rd, 1944, to MacArthur, Info Marshall, Arnold, Stratemeyer, Chennault.

(2) In addition, he would make limited night attacks in the Luzon area and conduct sea reconnaissance within 870 miles of Kweilin.

If these bases were lost, he planned to employ the heavy bomber group against air installations and shipping within 870 miles of Kunming, including Hainan, the Gulf of Tonkin, and Hong Kong.\*

Actually, the Kweilin base which had been evacuated on September 15th,\*\* was not regained and was not available to support the FOURTEENTH Air Force; the base at Liuchow, some eighty miles to the southwest, remained available until November 7th. However, whereas there were three bomber fields and one fighter field at Kweilin, there was only a single field at Liuchow.\*\*\* This one remaining East China Base, about 300 miles west northwest of Hong Kong, had to provide facilities for units operating in support of ground troops as well as long-range units; in mid-October, it supported one medium bomber squadron, one fighter squadron, one and a half tactical reconnaissance squadrons, as well as Forward Detachment, 308th Bomb Group (Heavy) (nine B-24's). The remaining B-24's which were available to support KING II had no base closer than the Kunming area, some 650 miles west, northwest of Hong Kong, and 1000 miles west of Formosa. Consequently, although the FOURTEENTH Air Force totalled some 512 aircraft, of which 236 were not committed to direct support of Chinese ground forces (see Table No. 8 for distribution of types), all but the B-24 type were prevented by range limitations from conducting operations beyond the coast of China and, due to the very limited base facilities available in East China, only a few B-24's could be operated beyond the coastal areas.

A further drastic limitation on operations of the FOURTEENTH Air Force was enforced by logistic deficiencies, particularly aviation gasoline. It had conducted operations above its logistic capabilities in August and September in an effort to slow the Japanese ground advance toward its bases. Consequently, operations during October were of necessity reduced one-third to one-half.\*\*\*\*

As a result of these conditions, CG, FOURTEENTH Air Force, did not adhere to either plan of employment, but instead, employed a combination of the two, operating as follows:

(a) On October 1st - 5th, and 13th - 15th, inclusive, he made daily armed sea sweeps along the China Coast to a distance of about

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\* Radio, CG, USAFCHI (Sultan) Dispatch CRX 14575, September 23rd, 1944 to MacArthur, Info Marshall, Arnold, Stratemeyer, Chennault.

\*\* "Way of a Fighter" by Claire Lee Chennault, New York, 1949.

\*\*\* Provisional Airfield List-China, Korea and Manchuria - Airfield Information Report No. 2. Ass't Chief of Air Staff, Washington, D.C., August 1st, 1945.

\*\*\*\* Director, Library Division, USAF History, Air University Letter, November 8th, 1950 to President, Naval War College.



100 miles off shore, and stretching from south of Hainan to Formosa.

(b) On October 5th and 9th, employing three B-24's, he laid mines in the Yangtze River, and on October 15th, employing twenty-five B-24's escorted by fighters, he attacked White Cloud Airdrome at Canton.

(c) On October 16th he launched an air strike consisting of twenty-eight B-24's, eight B-25's, twenty-nine P-51's, and twenty-one P-40's, against docks and shipping at Hong Kong. Many excellent shipping targets were discovered, presumably because much of the Japanese shipping in the South China Sea had taken refuge there from the THIRD Fleet and B-29 attacks on Formosa. CG, FOURTEENTH Air Force, claimed having sunk or damaged by this air strike approximately 40,000 tons of shipping. Although he realized that twice that amount of shipping remained undamaged, he was unable, due to the gasoline shortage,\* to launch a second air strike.

(d) Also, on October 16th, he commenced daily long-range reconnaissance of the South China Sea as requested by CINCPOA, employing four B-24's per day from Liuchow. Details of this reconnaissance will be covered under "Allied Air Search and Reconnaissance."

Enemy naval contacts made by the South China Sea reconnaissance started on October 16th and also by fourteen USAAF armed sea sweeps were reported to CINCPOA through a naval liaison unit of Naval Group China, located at FOURTEENTH USAAF headquarters. CINCPOA in turn passed these contacts to COMTHIRDFLT and other interested commands.

Because of logistic difficulties and a lack of bases, he was prevented from providing, other than the above-mentioned reconnaissance, effective direct support to the Leyte Campaign such as might have been gained by attacks on Formosa and Luzon. Unfortunately, the timing of the KING II Operation coincided with the southward drive of Japanese land forces in China which, together with logistic obstacles, endangered the entire operating position of the FOURTEENTH Air Force. Accordingly, except for the reconnaissance operations, the activities of this force will be dropped from further discussion.

(b) TWENTIETH Bomber Command (Table 9)

This command comprised the USAAF B-29's operating in Asia. It operated under CG, TWENTIETH Air Force,\*\* which in turn operated directly under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Coordination of its operations with those of theatre forces has been noted in COMSOWESPAC and CBI, (page 18).

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\* Letter from Director, Library Division, USAF History, Air University, November 8th, 1950, to President, Naval War College.  
 \*\* General H.H. Arnold (AC), USA.





TABLE 9  
 TWENTIETH BOMBER COMMAND  
 17 October, 1944  
 (ALL AIRCRAFT ARE B-29 TYPE)

FWD Base		Avail	35
Hsinching	Oper		30
	Avail		35
Kwanghan	Oper		29
	Avail		34
Kunglai	Oper		29
	Avail		36
Pengshan	Oper		27
	Avail		140
TOTALS	Oper		115

Data for this table was obtained from the following sources:

- (1) Ltr from Director, Library Division, Air University, November 8th, 1950.
- (2) Ltr from Director, Library Division, Air University, February 23rd, 1951.
- (3) TWENTIETH Bomber Command, Tactical Mission Reports Nos. 10, 11, and 12, October 14th, 16th and 17th, 1944.

The objective of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command was, at this time, the destruction of heavy industry, oil installations, aircraft plants, naval installations, and transportation within occupied China and Japan, through strategic bombardment and strategic mining.\* Its efforts were diverted from this objective to provide support for the KING II Operation.

From its main base in India its forces were deployed to forward bases in the Chengtu area of Central China whence they took off on their strikes. At the time of the initial Leyte landing, October 17th, there was a total of 140 B-29 aircraft in this command. These planes were allocated to forward bases as indicated in Table 9.

The B-29 aircraft had a maximum patrol radius without bombs of 1250 miles at cruising speed of 230 knots, or 1800 miles at 170 knots. With a 12,000 pound bomb load, these figures were reduced to 930 miles and 1385 miles respectively. The B-29 was heavily armed with one 20mm and ten .50 calibre guns, and carried armor and self-sealing tanks.\*\*

The Chengtu area of China, whence the B-29's operated, was 995 miles from Formosa, 1250 miles from Luzon, and 1265 miles from Okinawa.

The plan for supporting operations of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command called for maximum strikes on Formosa in coordination with the carrier strikes of the THIRD Fleet. The THIRD Fleet strikes were scheduled for October 12th and 13th; the B-29's were scheduled to strike on October 11th and 14th. Owing to adverse weather, the strike on October 11th was cancelled.\*\*\* On October 15th CINCPAC, in view of the possibilities of a fleet action between the THIRD Fleet and enemy surface units, requested TWENTIETH Bomber Command to exert maximum effort against the enemy air forces based on Formosa until the situation clarified.\*\*\*\* As a result, two additional strikes were scheduled against Formosa for October 16th and 17th.\*\*\*\*\*

The primary targets selected for these strikes were:

Okayama Aircraft Repair and Assembly Plant, Heito Airbase and Arsenal, and the Einansho Aircraft Depot.

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\* The Strategic Air Operations of Very Heavy Bombardment in the War Against Japan - Military Analysis Division, Army and Army Air Section, USSBS Final Report, September 1st, 1946.

\*\* Airplane Characteristics published by Naval War College, July 1944.

\*\*\* Director, Library Division, USAF History, Air University Letter, November 8th, 1950, to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 150651, October 1944, to Deputy Commander 20th Air Force and COMNAVGRPCINA.

\*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 152207, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.



These targets were selected as facilities which served the dual role of bases for staging aircraft into the Philippines and of assembly, repair, and modification of combat aircraft. It was believed that their destruction would not only eliminate the bases and the aircraft located there, but with the loss of important repair and assembly facilities, would cause an immediate reduction in the enemy's combat air strength. It was also believed that extensive damage to plant and tools might take four to six months to replace.\*

Secondary targets included the harbor installations at Takao and installations on the China Coast.

On October 14th, 130 B-29's took off from advanced China bases and between 1230 and 1430 attacked Formosa, Pescadores and China as follows:\*\*

<u>Target</u>	<u>No. Planes Striking</u>	<u>Tons of Bombs</u>
Okayama, Formosa	104	651.0
Taichu Airfield, Formosa	4	25.5
Nakushu Is., Pescadores	1	7.5
Namao Is., China Coast	1	3.0
Swatow, China	4	23.8
Hengyoung, China	2	14.0

Okayama was the primary target. However, some aircraft for various reasons were unable to reach this primary target, and therefore hit other targets of considerably less importance. No airborne interception was encountered. Anti-aircraft fire was meager and inaccurate. Three aircraft received minor damage in this strike, and two were lost operationally.

On October 15th, a photo reconnaissance of Takao by B-29's indicated that two battleships plus fifteen other ships were there at 1500.\*\*\* This was incorrect since no battleships were in the area.

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\* Headquarters 20th Bomber Command, Report of Operations, October 14th, 16th, 17th, October 28th, 1944.

\*\* Tactical Mission Report No. 10, 20th Bomber Command, October 28th, 1944.

\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 151831, October 1944 to CINCPAC and COMTHIRDFLT.

Two days later, on October 16th, another strike on Formosa was made as follows:\*

<u>Target</u>	<u>No. Planes Striking</u>	<u>Tons of Bombs</u>
Okayama, Formosa	33	208.8
Heito Airport, Formosa	25	159.3
Takao Harbor, Formosa	1	1.3

<u>Target</u>	<u>No. Planes Striking</u>	<u>Tons of Bombs</u>
Targets of Opportunity:		
Formosa and China Coast	14	75.5

In this strike some weak enemy airborne opposition was encountered. A total of fifty-one attacks were made by enemy interceptors which resulted in damage to two B-29's. Three enemy aircraft were claimed shot down, and three more probably destroyed. No B-29's were lost, although two aircraft received minor damage from anti-aircraft fire.

A third attack was made on Formosa on the following day, October 17th, as follows:\*

<u>Target</u>	<u>No. Planes Striking</u>	<u>Tons of Bombs</u>
Einansho Air Depot	10	32.5
Takao	13	84.8
Amoy	1	6.0

This strike was opposed by an estimated twenty-two enemy aircraft encountered over the targets. Eight of these aircraft were claimed shot down and seven damaged. Three B-29's were damaged by anti-aircraft fire; one was lost operationally.

As a result of these three strikes, Commander TWENTIETH Bomber Command claimed that the following major damage had been inflicted on Formosan targets:\*

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\* Tactical Mission Reports Nos. 11 and 12, 20th Bomber Command, October 28th, 1944.



Okayama - Eighty buildings destroyed and eighteen damaged at the aircraft assembly plant and at the airfield. In addition, photographic coverage showed that a total of 116 aircraft at the plant and the field had been destroyed or damaged. Some of this destruction had been accomplished by the THIRD Fleet strikes of October 12th and 13th. In the neighborhood villages, sixty-eight houses were destroyed, and more than fifty damaged.

Toshein - One warehouse and one barge damaged.

Takao - Two warehouses damaged; six or seven railroad tracks in marshalling yards destroyed, two ships damaged, and two probably damaged.

Taichu Airfield - Two aircraft damaged, and two possibly damaged; one hangar and one barracks building probably damaged.

Heito Airdrome - One aircraft destroyed; fourteen buildings damaged.

Einansho Air Depot - No damage assessment made due to cloud cover.

These three strikes were the extent of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command attack effort in support of the occupation of Leyte. In addition, B-29 photographic aircraft reconnoitered airfield installations on Formosa and Luzon at the request of COMSOWESPAC.\*

The B-29's on both attack and reconnaissance missions reported naval and shipping targets sighted to COMNAVGRPCHINA who in turn forwarded the information to CINCPAC and COMTHIRDFLT. This information as received by COMTHIRDFLT is noted under the operations of that commander.

It should be noted that, while the Lingga-Singapore area was within range of the B-29 reconnaissance aircraft operating from bases in India-Ceylon, such reconnaissance was not made. Apparently, it was not requested of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command,\* and instead, available photographic B-29's were employed over Formosa and Luzon. Had an effective reconnaissance of the Lingga-Singapore area been made, it would have indicated the numbers and types of Japanese warships in that area and would have alerted the Allied forces to their movements subsequent to the landings at Leyte.

#### (d) ALLIED AIR SEARCH AND RECONNAISSANCE

Allied air search plans for the Leyte operation envisaged land-based search operations from all three theaters: SOWESPAC, POA, and CBI.

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\* Director, Library Division, USAF History, Air University Letter, November 8th, 1950, to President, Naval War College.

The objective of all of the searches was to prevent the undetected approach of enemy naval forces toward the objective area or toward forces involved in the operation.

(1) Southwest Pacific Area

The air search plan of SOWESPAC called for a progressive extension of coverage toward and beyond the Philippines as bases became available. In addition to searches from Darwin, northward through the Timor and Banda Seas and from Emirau and Admiralties bases to the north, searches to the northwest would be made first from Owi, Schouten Islands and then, when ready, from Morotai. These searches, made by the longest ranged aircraft available (PB4Y), were designed to provide flank protection to the objective area and the communications thereto. Further coverage to the north and northeast of Leyte would be provided by tender-based seaplanes from Leyte as soon as practical and would close the gap between Northern Luzon and the western extremity of Central Pacific searches. The Leyte searches were scheduled to commence about D/2 day (October 22nd).\*

At the time of the beginning of deployment of the forces toward Leyte in early October, Search Plan EASY was in effect. This plan remained effective until October 19th. It required sector searches as shown on Diagram B and as indicated in the following table:\*\*

<u>Origin</u>	<u>Search Areas</u>	<u>Distance</u>
Darwin	320T-330T	825
	330T-339T	915
	339T-359T	630
	359T-035T	515
Emirau	318T-054T	300
Admiralties	294T-350T	300
Owi	280T-338T	1100 (Extended from 1000 commencing October 16th)

The plan called for the sectors from Darwin to be covered by the RAAF. Among the RAAF squadrons based at Darwin were one PBY, one B-24, one B-25, and one Boomerang. In addition there was one USAAF heavy bomb group (380th) with fifty-one B-24's.

\* COMAIRSEVENTHFLT Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000166, October 15th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary, COMAIRSEVENTHFLT, October 1944.



At Emirau in the Solomons the search was conducted by COMAIRNORSOLS. He had available at Emirau, New Zealand Squadron THREE with seventeen PV-1's and VPB-148 with twelve PV-1's. On October 15th, VPB-148 was relieved by VPB-137. COMAIRNORSOLS also conducted the search from Manus in the Admiralties. Based in the Admiralties was a portion of VPB-52 flying PBY's, and VPB-146 with twelve PV-1's. On October 15th, VPB-130 with fifteen PV-1's arrived at Manus from Hawaii and on October 16th, VPB-146 departed Manus for Owi en route to Morotai.

At Owi, Commander Fleet Air Wing SEVENTEEN who conducted the search under CG, FIFTH Air Force had available VPB-101 with twelve PB4Y-1's, and VPB-115 with sixteen PB4Y's. These two squadrons moved up to Morotai on October 18th.

As noted in the above table, the Owi searches were extended from 1000 to 1100 miles commencing on October 16th. This search was also extended on that date to include inland Philippine waters.\*

It is apparent that there were available ample numbers of aircraft to carry out the search plan. Actually not all of the squadrons involved in the search had that mission only to perform. The RAAF was also engaged in missions to destroy enemy forces and installations in its area of responsibility which entailed not only attack missions but also anti-submarine operations, search and rescue, and air blockade in the Banda Sea.\*\* COMAIRNORSOLS, had similar responsibilities in his area.

In addition to the coverage provided by Search Plan EASY there were three other types of operations conducted by Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, which in some degree augmented the regular reconnaissance.

Local anti-submarine patrols were conducted from several of the bases. In most cases these were in areas also covered by long-range reconnaissance as in the case of the anti-submarine patrols conducted by VPB-11 from Morotai, and by VPB-33 and 34 from Biak with the seaplanes operating from a base located at Mios Woendi Island prior to their movement to Leyte. A detachment of VPB-52 based on the HERON (AVP 2) at Hollandia patrolled a sea area off the New Guinea coast to about seventy miles commencing on October 9th until October 22nd when the detachment moved to Biak (Mios Woendi) to continue ASW patrols.\*\*\* These patrols were designed to provide anti-submarine protection to units at or in the vicinity of the bases. Two types of night operations were also conducted by Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC which provided greater augmentation to the daylight long-range reconnaissance than did the anti-submarine patrols:

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\* War Diary, VPB-115, October 16th, 1944.

\*\* Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Instructions No. 71, September 24th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary, VPB-52, October 1944.



(a) VPB-29 based in the TANGIER (AV 8) at Morotai conducted nightly armed reconnaissance (Blackcat) patrols in the Celebes Sea area. These patrols reached northwest to North Borneo, the Sulu Archipelago, and the Zamboanga Peninsula of Mindanao. Two sorties per night were flown until October 19th and thereafter three.\* These flights did not give complete coverage of the Celebes Sea but concentrated on anticipated centers of Japanese shipping activities based on current intelligence.

(b) USAAF B-24's of the SIXTY-THIRD Squadron (FORTY-THIRD Bomb Group (H)) of the FIFTH Air Force based at Biak conducted armed and unarmed night reconnaissance of the South and Central Philippines. The routes assigned varied. Thus on the nights of October 13th, 14th and 15th armed reconnaissance of the Davao area of Mindanao was made. On the night of October 16th two B-24's carried out unarmed reconnaissance of the Mindanao Sea; two more conducted a similar reconnaissance of the Sibuyan Sea area including Negros and Panay; while a fifth unarmed aircraft covered the Camote Group and a part of the east coast of Luzon. On the following night, October 17th, similar reconnaissance was made of the Sibuyan and Mindanao Seas.\*\*

It should be noted that these operations were not designed to strengthen directly the protection afforded by search plan EASY. Except for the anti-submarine patrols and for certain night searches commencing October 16th, these operations were in implementation of the directive to "intensify neutralization in the Western Visayas and Mindanao areas".... and to destroy "hostile naval and air forces and shipping in the Celebes Sea....denying use of naval facilities in the Sulu Archipelago to the Japanese and protecting the western flank of the operation."\*\*\* It should be clear that in conducting reconnaissance to find suitable targets, some additional reconnaissance protection not basically called for did accrue to the operation. This was due to the fact that; (a) the night operations provided some additional coverage of areas which under Search Plan EASY were covered only in daylight, and (b) the flights by USAF B-24's through the Visayas covered areas which were not otherwise covered. However, these operations were not sufficiently dense nor so planned as to preclude the undetected approach of enemy forces into the area.

On October 15th, CINCPAC requested that COMSOPAC make maximum practicable air reconnaissance of Surigao and San Bernardino Straits beginning on October 16th.\*\*\*\* This was to provide security for the THIRD Fleet which was then anticipating a fleet action in the waters southeast of Formosa. CG, FIFTH Air Force was directed to provide this special

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\* War Diary, VPB-29, October 1944.

\*\* Periodic Reports, A-2, 5th Bomber Command, October 1944.

\*\*\* Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operating Instructions No. 71, September 24th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 150341, October 1944 to COMSOPAC.



reconnaissance.\* As a consequence this latter commander directed that Sector Five of Search Plan EASY be extended to include coverage of both straits commencing on October 16th. In addition, five B-24's of SIXTY-THIRD Squadron, FIFTH Air Force, carried out unarmed reconnaissance of the western approaches to the straits during the night of October 16th-17th as previously indicated. No important contacts were reported by these aircraft.\*\*

## (2) Pacific Ocean Area

The air search plan employed by Pacific Ocean area units was a responsibility of Commander Task Group 30.5 under COMTHIRDFLT.\*\*\* Searches were conducted by land planes from Tinian and by seaplanes from Saipan and Kossol Passage, Palau. There were also searches from Eniwetok and Kwajalein, but as they had no bearing on the operation they will not be discussed. The plan in effect during the Leyte operation required sector searches as shown on Diagram B and is indicated in the following table:\*\*\*\*

<u>Origin</u>	<u>Search Areas</u>	<u>Distance</u>
Tinian-Saipan	245-272T	800
	272-353T	1000
	353-063T	600
	090-230T	400
Palau	300-360T	600

There were nine 1000-mile sectors and three 800-mile sectors. Those were covered by PB4Y-1 aircraft of VPB-102, 116 and 117\*\*\*\*\* based at Tinian with a total of forty-five aircraft. Of the seven 600-mile sectors from Saipan, three or four (the number varied from day to day) were covered by tender-based PB2Y-3's of VPB-4 assisted prior to October 6th by the PBM's of VPB-18. There were fourteen of the former and fifteen of the latter.\*\*\*\*\* The remaining three or four sectors were covered by PV-1 aircraft of VPB-150 and VPB-151. The seven shorter 400-mile Tinian searches were conducted by VPB-150 and 151 which two squadrons had a total of thirty-one PV-1 aircraft.\*\*\*\*\* From Kossol Passage, Palau, the six

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\* Commander Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Dispatches 152004 and 152300, October 1944 to CG, FIFTH Air Force.

\*\* Periodic Reports, A-2, 5th Bomber Command, October 1944.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT, Operation Order 21-44, Dispatch 031600, October 1944.

\*\*\*\* COMFWDAREA, CENPAC Operation Plan 6-44, Serial 000489, August 18th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diaries, VPB-102, 116, 117, October 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diaries, VPB-4 and 18, October 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diaries, VPB-150 and 151, October 1944.

600-mile sectors were covered by tender-based PBM-3's of VPB-202 and 216 with twenty-nine PBM's until October 21st when VPB-202 was relieved by VPB-21 and thereafter by VPB-21 and 216 with thirty PBM's.\*

As in SOWESPAC, the Central Pacific searches were conducted in daylight. On specific occasions the radius of patrols was extended. As has been noted, the Palau and Tinian searches were extended on October 8th and 9th to 775 and 1150 miles respectively to provide an airborne screen for TF 38 approaching Okinawa. Also, in compliance with an order from CINCPAC,\*\* the three Tinian sectors between 272°(T) and 299°(T) were extended on October 16th to 1150 miles to search for units of the Japanese Fleet which had sortied to attack cripples of the THIRD Fleet. This extended search made no contacts.\*\*\*

### (3) China-Burma-India Area

Search by China-based aircraft was commenced on October 16th by request of CINCPAC made the previous day.\*\*\*\* This search was conducted by B-24 type aircraft of the 308th Bomb Group, FOURTEENTH USAAF, based at Luichow.\*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC's request was for daily reconnaissance to detect movement of enemy naval forces toward the THIRD Fleet's area of operation.\*\*\*\* The THIRD Fleet was at that time operating east of Luzon and southeast of Formosa.

The search was designed to cover that area of the South China Sea bounded on the west by a line between Camranh Bay and Hailing Island (about midway on the China coast between Hainan and Hong Kong) and on the east by the Lingayen Peninsula, Luzon.\*\*\*\*\* It consisted of two courses each flown by one B-24 every twelve hours, thus requiring four sorties per day. The courses as shown on Diagram 4 were as follows:\*\*\*\*\*

East Course - Luichow to Hailing Island, thence southeast to a point sixty miles northwest of Lingayen, south for sixty miles, southwest for 150 miles, thence northwest to the China coast and Luichow.

West Course - Luichow to Hailing Island, thence south 515 miles passing to the west of Paracel Reefs, then 170 miles northeast, then northward to the China coast and Luichow passing to the east of the reefs.

This search continued throughout October without change. The day search planes departed Luichow about 0800; the night search planes about 2000.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diaries, VPB-21, 202, and 216, October 1944.

\*\* CINCPAC, Dispatch 150136, October 1944 to COMAIRWINGONE (CTG 30.5).

\*\*\* War Diary, VPB-116, October 1944.

\*\*\*\* CINCPAC, Dispatch 151230, October 1944 to COMNAVGRPCHINA.

\*\*\*\*\* Director, Library Division, USAF History, Air University Letter, November 8th, 1950 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA, Dispatch 160935, October 1944.



Contacts made by these search aircraft were broadcast while airborne on a frequency which was provided to CINCPOA,\* and post flight summaries were forwarded by 308th Bomb Group to Headquarters, FOURTEENTH Air Force where they were passed to interested commands at sea by a Navy liaison unit at that headquarters.\*\*

In considering the effectiveness of the land-based air search plan which was in effect on October 17th the following might be noted:

(a) In the SOWESPAC there were adequate numbers of aircraft but their operation was impeded by the lack of forward bases. From Biak an 1100-mile radius fell nearly 200 miles short of Brunei Bay and the Palawan Pass approach to the Philippines while to the north it extended only as far as San Bernardino Pass at its extremity. That this shortcoming was apparent to the commanders concerned is evident from the early movement of search aircraft to the newly established base at Morotai from where searches commenced on October 19th. The effectiveness of the new search plan, FOX, then inaugurated will be discussed in a later chapter.

(b) The search plan employed in POA was of sufficient density to provide warning of an approach of a major enemy force toward the Marianas and Palau. Due to the limitation of range and numbers of aircraft, however, an air search could not be devised which would provide a high probability of detection of an enemy force approaching Luzon from the Empire. Taking the shortest course from the Inland Sea to Luzon such a force would make its entire passage beyond the range of Marianas based search aircraft.

(c) Warning of an approach to the Philippines direct from the Empire could be gained by employment of an appropriate search from Leyte. The early establishment of such a search by tender-based aircraft from Leyte was included in the plans for the operation and will be discussed in a later chapter.

(d) The search plan employed by FOURTEENTH Air Force was not similar to any type of air search in use by the Navy at that time. The reasoning upon which this plan was based is not available to this study.

CINCPOA's request of October 15th had specified daily reconnaissance of the South China Sea north of the line Camranh Bay - Lingayen to detect possible movement toward the THIRD Fleet's position by enemy fleet units. It would seem that the most likely route of such units would be through Luzon Strait and that, on the basis of available intelligence, the origin of such a movement would be the Lingga-Singapore area. However, it is

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\* COMNAVGRPCHINA, Dispatch 160953, October 1944.

\*\* Director, Library Division, USAF History, Air University Letter, November 8th, 1950, to President, Naval War College.

apparent that the search provided only a relatively low probability of detection of a major enemy force which might move toward Luzon Strait from the south.

The operation of the four flights per day flown by the FOURTEENTH Air Force in reconnaissance from October 16th through October 31st required the authorization by CG, U.S. Forces, CBI, of 500 tons of POL (petroleum, oil, lubricants) supplies from theater stocks.\* Might this not have been better expended in maintaining a barrier patrol across the South China Sea? Navy doctrine current at the time,\*\* provided for search by patrol to disclose the passage across a geographic line. Such a patrol could have been maintained by using five flights per day for a radar detection range of sixty miles, or with eight daily flights for a detection range of forty miles.

(e) As has been pointed out previously in this chapter under "Allied Land and Tender-Based Aircraft" Section (3) "China, Burma, India Area" no provisions were made for reconnaissance of the Lingga-Singapore area, although available intelligence indicated the probable presence there of heavy units, less carriers, of the enemy fleet. Only B-29's of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command, based in Ceylon, could have provided this reconnaissance (as they did for the Lingayen operation later). Such reconnaissance apparently was not requested.\*

Why this was so is not understood for the obtaining of continuous information concerning the movements of Japanese major forces was of paramount importance to the Allied commanders at this time. Perhaps once again, the conviction that major elements of the Japanese Fleet would not be involved in opposition to the Allied landings at Leyte caused the Allied commanders to forego this essential reconnaissance.

(f) The TWENTIETH Bomber Command made only limited visible and photographic reconnaissance. This reconnaissance was generally made while en route to designated targets or in connection with obtaining target information for scheduled attacks. It should be pointed out here that the employment of the B-29's against Formosa was merely a temporary diversion from their basic employment against targets in China and Japan and was for KING II only.

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\* Director, Library Division, USAF History, Air University Letter, November 8th, 1950, to President, Naval War College.

\*\* Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine; U.S. Fleet Aircraft. USF 76 (Rev.) Vol. Three - Patrol Aircraft. Prepared by COMAIRSCOFOR, February 1942.



(e) ALLIED DEPLOYMENT OF NAVAL FORCES (Diagram B)

## (1) SEVENTH Fleet.

The deployment of the Allied naval forces of the SEVENTH Fleet prior to the Battle for Leyte Gulf was in furtherance of COMSOWESPAC's Plan, KING II, for the seizure by amphibious assault of positions in the Leyte area. Deployment was effected commencing in early October, primarily from bases at Manus in the Admiralty Islands and from Hollandia, New Guinea.

Naval forces involved in the deployment consisted of a Central Philippine Attack Force (TF 77), commanded by CTF 77,\* which attack force included gunfire support ships (TG 77.2), close air support carriers (TG 77.4), minesweepers (TG 77.5), a beach demolition group (TG 77.6), a close covering group (TG 77.3), a flagship group (TG 77.1), two amphibious forces (TF 78 and TF 79) and a service group (TG 77.7), two submarine forces (TF 71, TF 72), a motor torpedo boat group (TF 70.1) and tender and shore-based aircraft (TF 73).

These naval forces proceeded towards Leyte Gulf in more or less widely separated groups. This was due in part to speed differentials, in part to different points of departure, and in part to a difference in the planned arrival time in the objective area. For example, the bombardment group was scheduled to arrive in the objective area on D-3 day, whereas the transports were to arrive on D day. When in the vicinity of Allied air bases such as Manus, Hollandia, Pelelieu and Biak, these naval forces were under the cover of land-based aircraft. However, as the planes operating from these land bases covered limited search arcs, it is apparent that large areas between the points of departure and the points of destination of the Allied naval forces were left entirely unsearched. When not near such Allied air bases the Allied naval forces were forced to rely for air cover on carrier-based aircraft if available, otherwise they proceeded without any air cover whatsoever except that provided by their ship-based planes. This comment was particularly applicable to certain of the task groups required to accomplish the preliminary operations - notably the minesweeping groups and those groups required in the operations for the capture of Suluan and designated areas on Dinagat and Homonhon.\*\* It also applied to the Landing Craft Movement Group of TF 79.\*\*\* These groups proceeded without carrier-based air cover, excepting at those times generally near the objective area, when they were in the vicinity of the escort carriers. This was because the speeds of the various types of ships employed varied so markedly as to necessitate each task group sorting at a different time. This insured (a) that each group proceeded at its best speed, and (b) that concentration was effected prior to arrival within the objective area.

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\* Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, USN.

\*\* COMCRUDIV 4 Operation Plan 2-44, Serial 0008, October 5th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 54 (CTG 79.11.3), October 17th, 1944.



The carrier-based aircraft available were solely within the escort carriers. For this reason, a carrier group consisting of two escort carriers and two destroyer escorts was made available to the Northern Attack Force (TF 79), another of similar composition to the Southern Attack Force (TF 78), and a third to the First Reinforcement Group (TG 78.6)\*. This insured that the major transport groups were given some air cover. In addition to the Transport Groups, three other task groups, TG's 77.2, 77.4 and 77.6 which proceeded together, had ample air cover. This air cover was provided by the remaining twelve carriers of the escort carrier group (TG 77.4).

While there was some danger in moving forces to the objective area without adequate air or anti-submarine defense, it seems wise to point out that COMTHIRDFLT had been conducting heavy air strikes in the Formosa-Luzon area,\*\* and the TWENTIETH Bomber Command had also been attacking Formosa so that the danger of effective air attack on the SEVENTH Fleet advance forces had been seriously reduced. Also, submarine action during September and early October in the approach areas between the points of departure and the objective area had been almost negligible, with but one submarine having been definitely located in the area.\*\*\* This was the Japanese submarine (I-364)\*\*\*\* which was sunk by the SAMUEL D. MILES (DE), at C519, October 3rd, in position bearing 307 (T), distant eighty-five miles from Peleliu, Palau.\*\*\*\*\* Another Japanese submarine (RO 41) was known to have been operating on this date off Morotai since the SHELTON (DE) was torpedoed at 0808 October 3rd in Latitude 02°-32'N, Longitude 129°-13'E by submarine action. However, this position was well clear of the TF 77 movement routes to Leyte Gulf.

The Allied deployment of the principal forces and groups was effected as follows:

(a) The minesweeper group (TG 77.5) sortied first. This group departed Manus at 0808, October 10th,\*\*\*\*\* maintained a speed of advance of 9.4 knots (which was slightly more than the correct sustained speed for YMS and caused some straggling), rendezvoused on schedule at 0600, October 15th, ninety miles west of Point ART (Latitude 07°-04'N, Longitude 133°-00'E) with the Fueling group,\*\*\*\*\* completed fueling

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\* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary, COMTHIRDFLT, October 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* Operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas, October 1944, CINCPAC-CINCPOA, May 31st, 1945.

\*\*\*\* German-Japanese-Italian Submarine Losses, World War II OPNAV-P-33-100-NEW 5-46.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary SAMUEL D. MILES, October 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary SOUTHARD, October 10th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.5, Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Straits and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.



by 1642,\* then joined the Dinagat Attack Group (TG 78.4) and headed with that command toward the objective area. The weather now became bad with heavy rainfall and low visibility.

At 0141 October 17th, Sweep Unit ONE, consisting of HOVEY (F), SOUTHARD, HAMILTON, LONG, HOWARD, PALMER, CHANDLER, PREBLE, and SANDS, was detached and, with TG 78.4, proceeded ahead towards Leyte Gulf.\*\*

At 0432 Sweep Unit TWO, consisting of the minesweepers ZEAL, TOKEN, TUMULT, VELOCITY, and SCOUT,\*\*\* and at 0645 Sweep Unit THREE, consisting of the minesweepers REQUISITE, PURSUIT, REVENGE, SAGE, and SENTRY, proceeded independently.\*\*\*\* At 0719 October 17th these units were approaching the entrance to Leyte Gulf.

Meanwhile, the remaining units of TG 77.5, which were YMS minesweepers, less five YMS which had straggled because of the relatively high speed and bad weather,\*\*\*\*\* were some thirty or forty miles from Leyte.

(b) The Dinagat Attack Group (TG 78.4), less the Dinagat Bombardment Unit (TU 78.4.3, also titled TU 77.2.3), sortied from Hollandia at 1500, October 12th, maintained a speed of advance of about thirteen knots, and at 0600, October 15th, rendezvoused ninety miles west of Point ART with Fueling Group (TU 77.7.1) and with TG 77.5.\*\*\*\*\* At 1642, TG 78.4 completed fueling, and in company with TG 77.5 headed for Dinagat Island.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0141 October 17th, TG 78.4, less TU 78.4.3, accompanied by Sweep Unit ONE, departed the remaining ships of TG 77.5 and at speeds varying from twenty to twenty-six knots headed for the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf.

At 0540, HOVEY, HAMILTON, LONG, and SOUTHARD took station ahead of TU 78.4.1 (Black Beach ONE Unit) and headed for the approaches to Black Beach ONE on northern Dinagat Island. At the same time TU 78.4.2, consisting of LONG, ROSS, BISBEE, and HERBERT, proceeded towards the entrance to Leyte Gulf to await minesweepers from Black Beach THREE on Suluan Island. This unit was to capture Black Beach TWO on southern Homonhon Island.

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\* War Diary ASHTABULA, October 15th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 78.4, Report of Dinagat Group, Serial 0018, undated, page 2.

\*\*\* War Diary VELOCITY, October 17th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary SAGE, October 17th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 77.5, Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Strait and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report Amphibious Group 9 (CTG 78.4), Serial 0018, October 1944, Enclosure (B).



At 0600, TU 78.4.1 formed column astern of the minesweepers in order as follows: STACK, GALLUP, HUGHES (F), WARD, SCHLEY, KILBY, and ARIADNE. At 0635, the minesweepers commenced sweeping acoustic and moored mines to forty feet.

(c) (1) The Bombardment and Fire Support Group (TG 77.2), accompanied by the Escort Carrier Group (TG 77.4, less TU's 77.4.14, 77.4.24 and 77.4.34) and the Beach Demolition Group (TG 77.6), sortied Manus at 0650, October 12th, maintained a speed of advance of about fifteen knots, and at 0600,\* October 16th, in the fueling area about ninety miles west of Point ART, rendezvoused with the Fueling Unit (TU 77.7.1), consisting of the oilers SARANAC, ASHTABULA and SALOMONIE with their escorts. At 1300 CTG 77.2, who was to be in command of the advance forces from D-3 to D day, detached the Dinagat Bombardment Unit (TU 78.4.3) to provide covering forces for the operations against Black Beach ONE on northern Dinagat Island, Black Beach TWO on southern Homonhon Island and Black Beach THREE on Suluan Island.\*\* At 1400, when fueling was completed, TG's 77.2, 77.4 and 77.6 headed for the objective area.\*\*\* At 1700 CTG 77.2 detached the Escort Carrier Group (TG 77.4) to proceed independently to the objective area.\*\*\* About this time he received an intelligence report from Commander SEVENTH Fleet (Hollandia) which gave the latest information concerning the enemy and which provided an addenda to Annex MIKE of Op-plan 13-44. Most of the information therein has already been mentioned under "Information Available to the Allied Commander." It provided no changes which materially affected his plans. At 0719, October 17th, TG 77.4 was bearing 134°(T), distant forty-five miles from Suluan Island, and TG 77.2 was bearing 128°(T), distant 115 miles from Suluan Island.

(2) Although the weather forecasts from Hollandia and elsewhere gave good weather indications in the Leyte area, this was not in fact the case. Instead of the good sea and air conditions which were being predicted, the exact opposite was the case on October 16th and continued through the 17th. The ceiling was zero, the seas rough, the rain heavy. CTG 77.2 now had to determine whether to proceed according to plan or whether to recommend that D day be delayed. He studied the weather information and boldly decided to proceed.\*\*\*\*

This was an important and correct decision for the major Allied forces were underway, and considerable confusion might have resulted had it been necessary to recommend a delay.

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\* War Diary CRUDIV 4 (TG 77.2), October 12th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CRUDIV 12 (TU 78.4.3), Report of Bombardment and Support of Landing on Suluan Island, etc., Serial 0149, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report, CTG 77.2, Capture of Leyte Island, Serial 00147, November 5th, 1944, page 8.

\*\*\*\* Ibid, page 43.



As the hours passed the weather continued bad. By 0200 the following morning (October 17th) the winds had increased to thirty-four knots, the seas were choppy and rising and the visibility was impaired by frequent rain squalls.\*

(3) After TU 78.4.3 had been detached, it proceeded at twenty-six knots en route to the objective area. At about 0430, October 17th, in accordance with orders from CTG 78.4, CTU 78.4.3 detached the ROSS to join TU 78.4.1 (Black Beach ONE Unit), and the ROBINSON to join TU 78.4.2 (Black Beach TWO Unit).\*\* At about 0535 he was joined by the minesweepers HOWARD, PALMER, CHANDLER, and the high speed transports SANDS and CROSBY.\*\*\* At about 0550 in accordance with orders from CTG 78.4 he detached the COLUMBIA and BRYANT\*\* to remain outside the 100 fathom curve and support CTU 78.4.1. The units which remained under his direct command, i.e., DENVER, A.W. GRANT, HOWARD, PALMER, CHANDLER, SANDS, and CROSBY, composed TU 78.4.4 (Black Beach THREE Unit). CTU 78.4.3 now became CTU 78.4.4 as well.

As CTU 78.4.4 he now commenced operations to capture Suluan Island. At 0605 the A.W. GRANT, leading the SANDS and CROSBY, fell in column astern of the minesweepers,\*\* while the DENVER remained outside the 100 fathom curve. At 0610 the minesweepers commenced sweeping the approach channel for acoustic mines and moored mines to forty feet.\*\*\*\* The weather was bad and had been increasingly ugly since 0100. The waves were increasing in size and the visibility was decreasing making minesweeping operations difficult. However, Suluan Island was somewhat protected by Homonhon Island to the westward. At 0640 Suluan Island was sighted for the first time.\*\*\*\* This was ten minutes before the Japanese on Suluan Island sighted TU 78.4.4.\*\*\*\*\* At 0710 the sweep was completed.\*\*\* No mines were discovered.

At 0719 October 17th, TU 78.4.4 was closing Suluan Island and was preparing to disembark the landing forces.

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\* Action Report of Bombardment and Support of Suluan Island by TU 78.4.4 and of the Evening Operations by TU 78.4.3, October 17th, 1944, Serial 0149, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\* Action Report, A.W. GRANT, Report of Ship's Fire Support, Leyte Campaign, Serial 0105, November 10th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary HOWARD, October 17th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary PALMER, October 17th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary ZUIKAKU, October, 1944, WDC Document 161636, NA 12260.

(d) The Northern Attack Force (TF 78) sortied in two major groups:

(1) The Palo Attack Group (TG 78.1), plus the LST's and LSM's of the San Ricardo Attack Group (TG 78.2), the Close Covering Group (TG 77.3), Harbor Entrance Control Group (TG 78.5), certain units of the Panaon Attack Group (TG 78.3), sortied from Hollandia at 1600, October 13th, and headed for Point PET,\* (Latitude 02°-46'N, Longitude 136°-46'E). It rendezvoused with the KITKUN BAY and its escorts DENNIS and BUTLER at 1919 the same day.\*\*

(2) The San Ricardo Attack Group (TG 78.2), less its LST's and LSM's, plus the GAMBIER BAY, sortied from Manus at 1426, October 12th, and headed for Point PET.\*\*\*

At 1200, October 15th, these two major groups rendezvoused at Point PET to form TF 78.\*\*\*\* TF 78 then headed for the objective area. At 0719 October 17th this force was bearing 123°(T), distant 480 miles from Suluan Island.

(e) The Southern Attack Force (TF 79) sortied from Manus as follows:

(1) The Landing Craft Movement Group consisting of TG 79.1's Tractor Group ABLE and TG 79.2's Tractor Group BAKER, sortied from Manus Harbor on October 11th. Tractor Group ABLE, consisting of LST Unit (TG 79.5), Control Unit (TG 79.7), and LCI Unit (TU 79.7.1) sortied at about 0830,\*\*\*\*\* and Tractor Group BAKER (TG 79.6), consisting of LST-LSM Transport Unit (TU 79.6.1), and LCI Unit (TU 79.6.2) sortied at 1047.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CTU 78.1.6, Serial 0114, November 5th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary KITKUN BAY, October 13th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary FREMONT, October 12th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary FAYETTE, October 12th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* COMDESRON 54 Movement Plan 1-44, October 11th, 1944

Annex C; also War Diary COMDESRON 54, October 11th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary LCI(L) Flotilla 14 (CTG 79.6), October 11th, 1944.



Groups ABLE and BAKER were screened by DesRon 54 (TU 79.11.3). After sorting, the Landing Craft Movement Group headed for a rendezvous with certain units of Fueling Group (TU 77.7.1) which rendezvous was effected at 0700, October 17th.\* At 0719 these groups were bearing 119°(T) distant 480 miles from Suluan Island.

(2) Attack Group ABLE, less Tractor Group ABLE, plus TU 77.4.14, sortied from Manus at about 0700, October 14th,\*\* and headed for fueling rendezvous on October 18th in vicinity Point ART. At 0719 October 17th this group was bearing 119°(T) distant 665 miles from Suluan Island.

(3) Attack Group BAKER, less Tractor Group BAKER, sortied from Manus at 0957, October 14th,\*\*\* and in company with Attack Group ABLE, but ten miles astern, also headed for the fueling rendezvous on October 18th in vicinity of Point ART. At 0719 October 17th this group was bearing 119°(T) distant 665 miles from Suluan Island.

(f) (1) The Fleet Flagship Unit (TU 77.1.1) of the Flagship Group (TG 77.1), Central Philippines Attack Force (TF 77), departed from Hollandia at 0622, October 15th, and headed for a rendezvous with TF 79\*\*\*\* in Latitude 03°-10'N, Longitude 139°-50'E at 1200, October 16th.

At about 1115 COMSEVENTHFLT, who was also CTF 77 and who was in the WASATCH with this unit, received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch wherein he announced that he was preparing for fleet action and would be unable to provide fast carrier support for KING II until further notice.\*\*\*\*\* Although he must have been expecting such a message, as he was generally an information addressee of both CINCPAC and COMTHIRDFLT's dispatches and was therefore familiar with the developing situation, it necessarily presented a new problem which required immediate action as it challenged the whole KING II Operation. Since COMSEVENTHFLT had been at sea for about five hours and as COMSOWESPAC was still at Hollandia, COMSEVENTHFLT had then to decide, without consultation with COMSOWESPAC, whether to proceed with the KING II Operation or whether to recommend to COMSOWESPAC that the operation be delayed until either the fleet action had been decided or until the fast carrier support was once more available. He decided to continue the operation and so advised COMTHIRDFLT and COMSOWESPAC.\*\*\*\*\* In this same message he directed CTG 77.4 to strike the western Visayas on October 17th, 18th and 19th in lieu of TF 38.

COMSEVENTHFLT made this decision on the following considerations:

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- \* War Diary COMDESRON 54, October 11th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diary COMTRANSDIV 38 (CTU 79.3.3) October 14th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* War Diary CAMBRIA, October 14th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary WASATCH, October 15th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150149 October 1944 to CINCPAC and COMSOWESPAC.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMSEVENTHFLT Dispatch 150542 October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT, COMSOWESPAC, CINCPAC, etc.



(a) that the opinion stated in his OpPlan\* that there would be no major elements of the Japanese Fleet involved in opposition to the Allied landings at Leyte still obtained, (b) that this fleet action was expected to occur in the waters north of the Philippines and was not expected to embrace units of the SEVENTH Fleet, (c) that he had adequate forces to effect a landing at Leyte Gulf without direct support from the THIRD Fleet and (d) that he did not consider the situation sufficiently dangerous to warrant any change in plans at this time. He still had about thirty hours in which to make a final decision and he therefore continued on to await more information on the developing situation.\*\* This action by COMSEVENTHFLT was not blind adherence to plan, but appears instead to have been a calculated risk which was based on the information available to him, on his analysis of enemy capabilities at this time, and on the dictates of his own judgment guided by the known views of his superiors. While it is true that many of the units of TF 77 were proceeding towards Leyte Gulf in week, separated detachments and therefore presented inviting targets for raiding operations by Japanese surface and striking forces and while it is true that CINCPAC had indicated a possibility of strong enemy forces debouching through Surigao Strait or through San Bernardino Strait,\*\*\* the decision by COMSEVENTHFLT is considered to have been correct. It was properly made by him as it was a naval decision and was within his competence as the COMSEVENTHFLT.

At 2030, October 16th, the Fleet Flagship Unit joined TF 79 and continued on with that force toward the objective area.\*\*\*\* At 0719 October 17th this unit was bearing 119°(T) distant 665 miles from Suluan Island.

(f) (2) The Cruiser Unit (TF 77.1.2) of the Flagship Group (TG 77.1), Central Philippines Attack Force, departed Hollandia at 1115, October 16, and headed for a rendezvous with TF 79.\*\*\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC with the Commander Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC was in the NASHVILLE.\*\*\*\*\* At 0719 October 17th this unit was bearing 128°(T) distant 860 miles from Suluan Island.

At about 1115 on the preceding day (October 15th) COMSOWESPAC received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch\*\*\*\*\* wherein he stated that except for today's Luzon strike he would be unable to provide fast carrier support for KING II until further notice.

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\* CANFSOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex M.

\*\* Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, USN Letter June 7th, 1952 to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN, Head of World War II, Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.

\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 150341, October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\*\* War Diary WASATCH, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150149, October 1944 to CINCPAC and COMSOWESPAC.



What considerations passed through his mind when he received this dispatch are not available to this study. However, it appears that he took no direct action but instead awaited action by his naval commander. Needless to say, the decision of that commander to proceed with the KING II Operation appears to have been received with satisfaction. The fact that COMSEVENTHFLT's decision was so received shows that a high level of mutual understanding had been achieved between the theater commander and his naval commander.

(g) Reinforcement Group ONE (TG 78.6) sortied from Hollandia at about 0700, October 16th. Upon sortie it rendezvoused at 1810 with Escort Carrier Unit (TU 77.4.24) at Point CUB, and headed for the objective area, maintaining an average speed of between 9.5 and 10.5 knots.\* At 0719 October 17th this group was bearing 130°(T) distant 930 miles from Suluan Island.

(h) Reinforcement Group TWO (TG 78.7) and Reinforcement Group THREE (TG 78.8) remained at anchor at Hollandia.

(2) Other SEVENTH Fleet Forces

(a) Motor Torpedo Boat Group

The Motor Torpedo Boat Group (TU's 70.1.3 and 70.1.6) sortied from Mios Island, Woendi, Shouten Islands at 1430 October 6th and headed for Kossol Passage, Palau where they arrived at 1644, October 13th. At 0719, October 17th, they were at anchor in Kossol Passage.\*\* (While other motor torpedo boat units were dispersed throughout the area they had no effect on the operations connected with the Battle for Leyte Gulf and will therefore be omitted).

(b) Submarine Force SEVENTH Fleet

During Operation KING II the submarines of the SEVENTH Fleet were generally concerned with the following objectives which, while worded differently, were similar in substance to those assigned the submarines of the Pacific Fleet.

(1) The protection of Allied operations by the maintenance of an offensive reconnaissance line across the enemy's most probable line of advance.

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\* Action Report, Reinforcement Group 1, Leyte Island (CTG 78.6), Serial 0154, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* War Diaries WACHAPREAGUE, WILLOUGHBY, OYSTER BAY, HALF-MOON, and MTB Squadrons 7, 12, 21, 33 and 36, October 1944.

(2) The maintenance of morale and aviation efficiency by providing lifeguard submarines to recover downed flyers.

(3) The protection of Allied operations by the employment of patrols stationed in strategic locations.

(4) The improvement of naval operations through the obtainment of weather data and the forwarding of weather reports based thereon.\*

Although these objectives are listed in the order shown by COM SEVENTHFLT, there were occasions when each of the objectives had priorities over the others and therefore it can be assumed that the above listing is not necessarily in order of importance. Actually, it is doubtful if there were, in fact, four objectives, for does it not seem reasonable to assume that objectives (1) and (3) are one and the same objective, i.e., the protection of Allied operations by intercepting, reporting, and destroying enemy forces approaching the area of operations?

The COMSEVENTHFLT, insofar as the Leyte operation was concerned, received his directives directly from COMSOWESPAC and, in turn, issued his own directives directly to his Commander Submarines Basing West Australia (CTF-71)\*\* and his Commander Submarines Basing East Australia (CTF-72)\*\*\* as shown in Plate II. He appears to have completely by-passed his Commander Submarines SEVENTH Fleet. Why this was so remains unclear for on February 15th, 1944,\*\*\*\* in accordance with orders from COMINCH,\*\*\*\*\* the submarines of the Southwest Pacific Theater were reportedly organized under Commander Submarines SEVENTH Fleet with one subordinate task force commander, all under the operational control of COMSEVENTHFLT.\*\*\*\*\* Under this organization the submarines were to be employed as directed by COMSEVENTHFLT with the concurrence of COMSOWESPAC.\*\*\*\*\* Actually re-organization had not been made fully effective by October 1944 for reasons not available to this study,\*\*\*\*\* but possibly because COMSEVENTHFLT,

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\* CANFSOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex H, Submarine Operations, paragraph 1.

\*\* Rear Admiral Ralph W. Christie, USN.

\*\*\* Captain John M. Haines, USN.

\*\*\*\* History, United States Naval Administration in World War II, Submarine Commands, no date nor serial, microfilm A-2020.

\*\*\*\*\* COMINCH Letter Serial 00107, January 12th, 1944 to CINCPAC and COMSEVENTHFLT.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 1944, Enclosure (A); also Vice Admiral James Fife, USN Letter February 3rd, 1952 to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN(Ret) Head of World War II, Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.

\*\*\*\*\* Rear Admiral Murray J. Tichenor, USN(Ret), Operations Officer, TF 71 during KING II, Statement February 3rd, 1952 to Commodore R. W. Bates, USN(Ret) Head of World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.



in view of the fact that his Commander Submarines SEVENTH Fleet was also CTF 71, had decided that he could facilitate operations if he operated his west coast and east coast submarines independently of one another. It is of interest that this decision was very similar to the decision which he had made earlier with relation to the command of the Philippines Attack Force and which has been commented on previously under "Chain of Command within SOWESPAC."

The Submarines of TF 71 when on patrol were assigned to one of two operational groups:

(a) TG 71.1, which was composed entirely of United States submarines and operated generally in the Northern sectors of the Southwest Pacific Theater.\*

(b) TG 71.7, which was composed entirely of British and Netherlands submarines and operated generally just north of the Malay Barrier in the Flores and Java Seas.\*\*

The submarines of TF 72, which force was composed entirely of American submarines, were operated, when on patrol, as one task group, (TG 72.1). These submarines were engaged entirely in special missions to the Philippines which consisted, in general, of supplying and evacuating coast watchers, weather observers and aircraft spotters, and, on occasions, guerrilla forces.\*\*\* While on these missions the submarines were authorized to destroy important enemy forces encountered when accomplishment and security of the special missions were not jeopardized thereby. They were also directed to make immediate contact reports of major enemy forces encountered.\*\*\*\* Since but three submarines, NARWHAL, NAUTILUS and CERO performed any missions during October 1944, and since none of these submarines made any contacts or reports which affected KING II, further discussion of TF 72 will be dropped.

The operations of submarines by COMSOWESPAC differed somewhat from that by CINCPAC. As will be shown later, under Submarine Force Pacific Fleet, CINCPAC divided the Western Pacific north of the Philippines into large patrol areas each of which he designated by a name such as MARU MORGUE. He subdivided each of the large patrol areas into a number of sub areas each of which was also designated by a name. He did this so that he might rotate the submarines within a large patrol area from one sub area to another. Such rotation was called "a rotating patrol."\*\*\*\*\*

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\* CTG 71.1 Operation Plan 1-44, September 1st, 1944.

\*\* CTG 71.7 Operation Plan A-44, September 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* Submarine Operational History World War II, prepared by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 139.

\*\*\*\* CTF 72 OpOrd S64-44, Serial 00213, October 2nd, 1944 and CTF 72 OpOrd S65-44, Serial 00216, October 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Submarine Operational History World War II, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 55.



COMSOWESPAC also divided his water areas into large patrol areas, but did not subdivide them. He did not employ a "rotating patrol" but, instead, stationed his submarines in one or more of these large patrol areas as required by the demands of the situation. He designated his patrol areas by numbers and letters rather than by names,\* but retained CINCPOA's names to the patrol areas east of the Philippines which CINCPOA had temporarily established for the previous operation, STALEMATE II,\*\* the capture of Felelieu, Anguar, Yap and Ulithi, which had occurred during September 1944.

COMSOWESPAC patrol designations are shown in Plate III as A2 to A8, B2 to B9, C1 to C4, D1 to D7, E1, E2, E4, E5, E8, E9, F1 to F8, G1 to G9, H1 and H2. CINCPOA patrol area designation for the areas to the east of the Philippines are also shown on the same plate as WOODLOT, MAPLE GROVE, FLOWER BED, CORN FIELD, BRIAR PATCH, FISH POND and VINEYARD.\*\*\*

It will be remembered that the dividing line between Pacific Ocean Areas (PCA) and Southwest Pacific (SOWESPAC) had been set by the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Latitude  $20^{\circ}-00'N$ . This line had been somewhat artificial and had prevented the fullest exploitation of Luzon Strait by submarines of either command.\*\*\*\* With the importance of this area increasing and the Philippine operations in the offing that portion of Luzon Strait lying between Latitude  $20^{\circ}-00'N$ , and Latitude  $18^{\circ}-30'N$  and between Hainan Island and Longitude  $130^{\circ}-00'E$  had been temporarily given by mutual agreement between the theater commanders to COMSUBPAC on May 22nd, 1944.\*\*\*\*\* This gave COMSUBPAC control of the entire strait. Likewise at the same time, presumably to more effectively support the STALEMATE II Operation, that portion of the Southwest Pacific lying between the east Philippine coast and Longitude  $130^{\circ}-00'E$  and between Latitude  $18^{\circ}-30'N$  and Latitude  $07^{\circ}-30'N$  had been temporarily given to COMSUBPAC, also by mutual agreement between the theater commanders.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Submarine Operational History World War II, Commander Submarine Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 129.

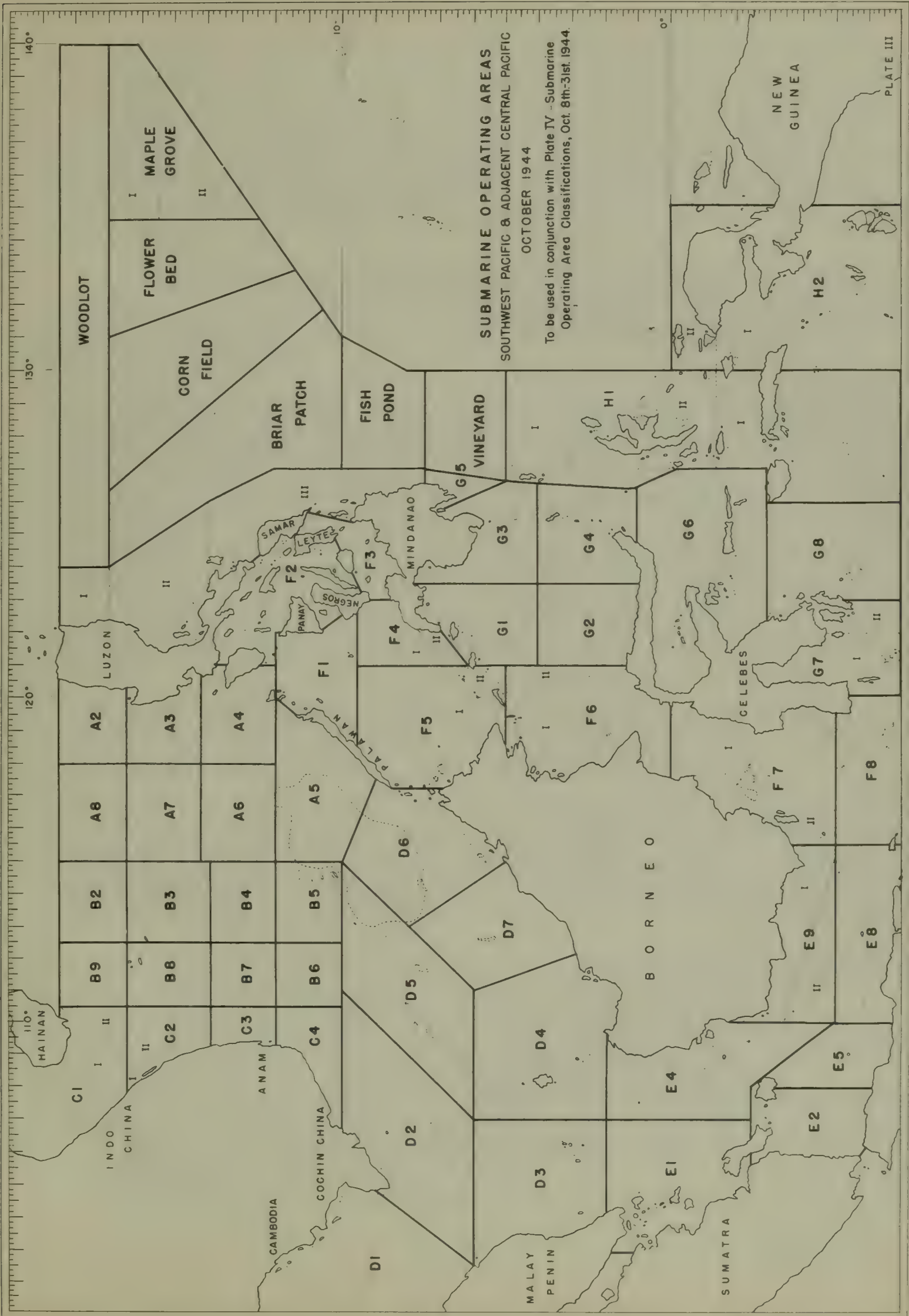
\*\* PACFLT Letter 18CL-44, Addendum No. 2.

\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC had additional patrol areas designated A1, A9, B1 located between Hainan east coast to Longitude  $121^{\circ}-00'E$  between Latitude  $20^{\circ}-00'N$  down to Latitude  $18^{\circ}-30'N$  and (I) which was formed in the west at Longitude  $121^{\circ}-00'E$  to north coast of Luzon and east coast of Philippines eastward to Longitude  $130^{\circ}-00'E$  between Latitude  $20^{\circ}-00'N$  down to Latitude  $07^{\circ}-30'N$ . However, as CINCPOA area designation absorbed most of these areas they, as well as areas E3, E6, E7 and F9, which are located south of the Malay Barrier, have been left off Plate III.

\*\*\*\* Submarine Operational History World War II, Commander Submarine Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 73.

\*\*\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 220915, May 1944 to CINCPOA.





**SUBMARINE OPERATING AREAS**  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC & ADJACENT CENTRAL PACIFIC  
OCTOBER 1944

To be used in conjunction with Plate IV - Submarine  
Operating Area Classifications, Oct. 8th-31st. 1944.





Since KING II was entirely a Southwest Pacific operation, though supported throughout by the THIRD Fleet, CINCPQA on September 27th recommended to COMSOWESPAC that the area south of 18°-30'N, presently being patrolled by POA submarines, be returned to COMSOWESPAC.\* COMSOWESPAC concurred in this proposal and suggested that the transfer be made effective on the same date that CINCPQA's Standard Operating Procedure No. ONE (SOP-1) which explained CINCPQA's system of zone classification, became effective.\*\* CINCPQA agreed and ordered his SOP-1 effective 2400, October 4th.\*\*\*

This SOP-1 which is explained later under Submarine Force Pacific Fleet, governed the operations of aircraft, surface ships and submarines notably within Submarine Patrol Zones, Air Surface Zones, Joint Zones and Blind Bombing Zones.

The zone classification system employed by COMSOWESPAC was practically the same as that prescribed in SOP-1, differing only in that the SOWESPAC submarines were protected in transitting SOWESPAC Blind Bombing Zones by a system of safety lanes classified as Joint Zones which extended fifteen miles each side of a fixed route whereas CINCPQA's submarines were protected by a moving haven established by a submarine notice which automatically extended an area thirty miles ahead, sixty miles behind and fifteen miles on each side of the estimated track given and which moved with the submarine.\*\*\*\* This, similarly was an important consideration, for is it not clear that had it been otherwise, particularly in the border areas between SOWESPAC and POA, considerable confusion between surface and submarine forces might otherwise have resulted?

The classification of submarine zones in SOWESPAC was a responsibility of COMSOWESPAC through his COMSEVENTHFLT.\*\*\*\*\* How this was accomplished throughout October 1944 is depicted on Plate IV.

Since the areas WOODLOT, FISH POND, BRIAR PATCH, CORN FIELD, FLOWER BED and MAPLE GROVE were to remain under CINCPQA until October 4th, CINCPQA in his Zone Notice #33 classified these areas as air surface zones commencing 2100, October 1st and classified the unnamed area between BRIAR PATCH and FISH POND and the east coast of the Philippines, a

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\* CINCPQA Dispatch 272014, September 1944 to COMSOWESPAC info COMINCH, COMTHIRDFLT, COMSEVENTHFLT, COMSUBPAC, CTF 71 and 72.

\*\* COMSEVENTHFLT Dispatch 061936, October 1944 to CTF 71 and 72. (Separate COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 300246 September 1944 to CINCPQA).

\*\*\* CINCPQA Dispatch 022100, October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\*\* CINCPQA Standard Operating Procedure SOP-1, Serial SOP-1, September 15th, 1944; Operations Instruction Number 69, SOWESPAC, September 19th, 1944; Submarine Operational History, World War II, prepared by COMSUBPAC, Vol. I, page 76.

\*\*\*\*\* Submarine Force Pacific Fleet OpSerial 55, October 11th, 1944, para 9.





**SUBMARINE OPERATING AREA CLASSIFICATIONS**  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC & ADJACENT CENTRAL PACIFIC

OCTOBER 8 th. - 31 st. inc. 1944

(APPENDIX 5 TO ANNEX "L" TO CANF, SWPA OP-PLAN 13-44

CINCPOA'S ZONE NOTICE 39)

All areas submarine patrol zones unless otherwise indicated:

Dotted areas indicate air surface zone 

Hatched areas indicate joint zone 

Mottled areas indicate blind bombing zone 

OCTOBER	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
A2 to A8																								
B2 to B9																								
C1-C2																								
	I																							
	II																							
C3 - C4																								
D1 to D7																								
E1-E2-E4-E5-E8																								
E9																								
	I																							
	II																							
F1 to F3-F8-F9																								
F4 to F7																								
	I																							
	II																							
G1 to G6 - G8																								
G7																								
	I																							
	II																							
H1-H2																								
	I																							
	II																							
WOODLOT																								
MAPLEGROVE																								
	I																							
	II																							
FLOWERBED																								
CORN-FIELD																								
BRIAR-PATCH																								
FISH-POND																								
VINEYARD																								
BETWEEN EAST COAST PHILIPPINES AND AREAS WOODLOT, BRIAR-PATCH AND FISH-POND																								
	I																							
	II																							
	III																							



submarine patrol zone, also commencing at 2100, October 1st.\*

In view of the fact that Allied forces would be operating in the area between WOODLOT, BRIAR PATCH, FISH POND and the east coast of the Philippine Islands, COMSOWESPAC made plans to reclassify this area. He informed CINCPAC of these new plans on or prior to October 13th for on this date, CINCPAC informed his command that COMSOWESPAC had made this area an air surface zone effective 2000, October 15th, and had made the area between WOODLOT, BRIAR PATCH and the east coast of the Philippine Islands north of Latitude 14°N a joint zone effective 0001, October 18th.\*\*

Since the patrol area east of the Philippine Islands during the latter part of September and early October continued to be his responsibility, CINCPAC stationed the submarine PARCHE in San Bernardino Strait, the submarine DRUM in Surigao Strait and designated the operating areas as submarine patrol zones. He advised COMSOWESPAC that the PARCHE and DRUM would start retiring from these stations on October 15th unless COMSOWESPAC desired that they withdraw earlier.\*\*\* He also advised COMSOWESPAC that, although COMTHIRDFLT required no lifeguard submarines in these straits, he (CINCPAC) believed that it was desirable that the straits be guarded against exit by enemy forces until our surface forces were in the vicinity.\*\*\*

CINCPAC's reason for suggesting October 15th seems to have been the fact that since TF 38 would be fueling on that date to the eastward of Luzon and, on the following day, would commence the planned air strikes against Luzon and the Visayas, he desired to remove his submarines from positions where their activities might cause them to be attacked by own planes. Such an attack was possible because San Bernardino Strait and Surigao Strait after 2000, October 15th were located in air surface zones.

COMSOWESPAC considered CINCPAC's departure date of October 15th as too late and so advised CINCPAC, for at 2030, October 12th the PARCHE, and presumably the DRUM, received orders from COMSUBPAC to be north of Latitude 18°-30'N prior to 2000, October 15th.\*\*\*\* Once these submarines had departed, COMSOWESPAC planned to leave the eastern exits to San Bernardino Strait and to Surigao Straits unguarded despite CINCPAC's

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- \* CINCPAC Dispatch 302152, September 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT, COMSUBPAC info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, COMSEVENTHFLT, CTF 71 and 72.
  - \*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 132225, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT, COMSUBPAC, info COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC, CTF 71, 72 and 77 (Repeats restrictions promulgated for SOWESPAC area).
  - \*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 022100, October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC info COMTHIRDFLT, COMAAF, COMSUBPAC, COMSEVENTHFLT, CTF 71 and 72.
  - \*\*\*\* War Patrol Report, PARCHE, Report of the THIRD War Patrol Serial 78, December 2nd, 1944.



recommendation to the contrary. His reason for this, although nowhere stated specifically, can be found in his plans for the employment of TF 71 submarines for KING II. These plans and those of his subordinates in compliance with them were as follows:

(a) CANFSOWESPAC in his Operation Plan\* directed CTF 71 and CTF 72 as follows:

While continuing present missions to the fullest extent practicable, station strong offensive and reconnaissance patrols and lifeguard submarines in accordance with instructions to be issued by COMSEVENTHFLT. In general, operations will be conducted to interdict and report enemy surface forces in the approaches to our movement routes and objective area.

(b) In amplification of this directive COMSEVENTHFLT on October 9th directed CTF 71 and CTF 72 to execute the following tasks in support of the operations of the THIRD Fleet and the Central Philippines Attack Force. These tasks were in general:

(1) To maintain strong patrols in the western entrances to the Celebes and Sulu Seas and in Makassar Strait.

(2) To maintain strong patrols off the Hainan-Luzon area in coordination with COMSUBPAC.

(3) To give prompt and early warning of movements of enemy forces, particularly major units approaching from the Brunei-Singapore area.

(4) To station one lifeguard submarine off Cape Bolinao, Luzon and one off Subic Bay, Luzon on October 16th and 17th; and one lifeguard submarine off Coron Island, Visayas on October 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th. During this time there was also one lifeguard submarine off Balikpapan, Borneo. This station had been patrolled since September 25th.

(5) To provide weather reports.\*\*

In issuing these instructions to CTF 71 (who was based at Perth, Australia) and to CTF 72 (who was based at Brisbane, Australia) COM SEVENTHFLT also advised them that COMSUBPAC "was maintaining strong patrols on Formosa-Luzon line and off Sasebo, Kyushu with particular emphasis on covering movements of enemy carriers," and further directed

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\* CANFSOWESPAC Operation Plan 12-44, Serial 00019A, September 25th, 1944, page 4, paragraph h.

\*\* COMSEVENTHFLT Dispatch 090246, October 1944 to CTF 71 and CTF 72.

CTF 71 to report promptly his prospective deployment in support of this operation.

Generally at this time the submarines in Luzon Strait were operating against merchant shipping and made no real attempt to block Luzon Strait until October 15th when they were ordered to do so by dispatch.\* Likewise, the submarines operating off Sasebo were engaged principally against enemy merchant shipping whereas the submarines off Bungo Suido were those assigned the responsibility for covering the enemy carriers in the Inland Sea.\*\*

The directives issued by CANFSOWESPAC, as stated in paragraph (a) above, and by COMSEVENTHFLT as stated in (b) above plus the Informative Annex on Submarine Operations attached to CANFSOWESPAC OpPlan 13-44 are confusing, as they are in disagreement. In the first place COMSOWESPAC's major objective at this time was the gaining of the command of the Leyte-Surigao Strait area and the establishment there of major air, naval and logistic bases for the support of subsequent operations.\*\*\* In reference (a) CANFSOWESPAC called for one objective in support of this basic objective. This was the protection of the THIRD Fleet and the Central Philippines Attack Force during KING II by the employment of strong offensive and reconnaissance patrols.

In reference (b) COMSEVENTHFLT gave two protection objectives in support of the operations of the THIRD Fleet and the Central Philippines Attack Force. These objectives should properly accomplish CANFSOWESPAC's protection objective. What were these two objectives? One was protection by maintaining strong patrols in the western entrances to the Celebes and Sulu Seas and in Makassar Strait; the other was protection by maintaining strong patrols in the Hainan-Luzon area in coordination with COMSUBPAC. But would the accomplishment of these objectives, accomplish CANFSOWESPAC's objective? It would appear not, for CANFSOWESPAC desired that his objective be accomplished by interdicting and reporting enemy surface forces in the approaches to the Allied movement routes and the objective area. But, COMSEVENTHFLT, on the other hand directed that his objectives be accomplished by giving prompt and early warning of enemy forces, particularly major units approaching from the Brunei-Singapore area.

This negative view is supported by Annex H to CANFSOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44 which states, for information, that these protection objectives were to be accomplished by the maintenance of a submarine offensive reconnaissance line across the enemy's most probable line of advance, and by submarine patrols stationed in strategic locations.

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\* CTF 17 Dispatch 150931, October 1944 to all Submarines.

\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 328-44, Serial 00847, September 25th, 1944 to CTG 17.7.

\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Operations Instructions Number 70, September 21st, 1944.



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The problem in CTF 71's mind was how to reconcile "in the approaches" which means relatively nearby, and "early" which means relatively far away.\* Does not an offensive reconnaissance line across the enemy's most probable line of advance also give an impression of distance? And does not the maintenance of strong patrols in the Hainan-Luzon area do likewise?

CTF 71 was concerned with that portion of his directive from COM SEVENTHFLT which stated "particularly major units approaching from the Brunei-Singapore area." Did this mean that submarines were to be stationed so as to intercept these forces?\* If so, where, for since Brunei was in Borneo, and Singapore was at the southern tip of the Malayan Peninsula, there was a minimum distance of some 700 miles of South China Sea between them.

CTF 71 was also concerned with CANFSOWESPAC's desire that submarine operations against shipping be continued at the fullest extent practicable.\* For all of these operations required submarines. But, where were these submarines? Although he commanded thirty-six American submarines, six of these submarines were returning to base at Fremantle after having completed their patrols; one, the CERO was en route to Mios Woendi, (it arrived there on October 13th) and twelve others were in port at Fremantle undergoing overhaul with the earliest readiness for sea for any submarine, October 18th. Thus, he had available for immediate operations only seventeen American submarines, of which four were required for lifeguard duty. All seventeen submarines were on patrol station or were en route there.\*\* In general, the mission of these submarines was "to destroy enemy shipping and to deny the enemy use of vital traffic lanes by the employment of unrestricted submarine warfare."\*\*\*

He commanded, in addition, ten British and four Netherlands submarines. Of these submarines, three British were returning to base at Fremantle after completing their patrols, and two British and three Netherlands submarines were in port at Fremantle undergoing overhaul with the earliest readiness for sea of any submarine, October 15th. Thus, he had available for immediate operations, three British and one Netherlands submarines already on station and two British submarines en route to their patrol stations - a total of five British and one Netherlands submarines. These submarines were not available for any and all duties within SOWESPAC, but were instead, because of limited cruising radius, restricted to operations in the southern part of that area and generally in the area just

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\* Rear Admiral Murray J. Tichenor, USN(Ret), Operations Officer, TF 71 during KING II, Statement February 3rd, 1952 to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head of World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.

\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 1944.

\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Operation Orders to Submarines Concerned.

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north of the Malay barrier in the Flores and Java Seas,\* although HMS SIRDAR was in Sunda Strait. The Netherlands submarines were to be employed on special missions to maintain communications with the Netherlands East Indies.\*\*

Students of submarine operations may wonder why CTF 71 did not advance the date of completion of some of his submarines which he had known, at least since September 25th, 1944, might be required for KING II; or, failing that, why he did not employ some of his submarines returning from patrol, even though without torpedoes, to assist in covering enemy movements. He may have been affected by his intelligence which had forecast that no major elements of the Japanese Fleet would be involved in opposition to the Allied landings at Leyte and therefore, he felt it was not necessary to consider seriously the possible movement of enemy forces into the objective area. However, the most likely answer appears to have been that COMSEVENTHFLT's delay in issuing directives - he delayed from September 25th until October 9th, approximately two weeks - upset CTF 71's plans so that he was unable to revise his base overhauls which were operated on a very tight schedule.\*\*\*

He solved his problem and informed CTF 77 (Commander Philippine Attack Force) that he planned to deploy his submarines for the period October 15th to October 25th as follows:\*\*\*\* (Plate V).

(a) One pack of two submarines (BREAM and RATON) off west central Luzon.

(b) One submarine south of and one submarine north of Scarborough Shoal. (RAY was assigned to one of these stations but suffered an operational casualty on October 14th and returned to base).

(c) Two submarines (ROCK and BERGALL) south of Paracel Reef.

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\* CTG 71.1 Operation Plan 1-44, September 1st, 1944; also Submarine Operational History World War II, prepared by Commander Submarine Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 133.

\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 1944.

\*\*\* Rear Admiral Murray J. Tichenor, USN(Ret.), Operations Officer, TF 71 during KING II, Statement February 3rd, 1952, to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret.), Head of World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Letter, Serial 00328, November 17th, 1944 to CTF 77; CTF 71 Dispatch 101426, October 1944 to COMSEVENTHFLT and COMSOWESPAC. (The names of the submarines concerned were not listed in these references but have been included here for clarity. The names were obtained from Dispatch orders.)









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(d) One pack of two submarines (BLUEGILL and ANGLER) in the vicinity of Cape Calavite.

(e) One submarine (DARTER) in the southern approaches to Palawan Passage.

(f) One submarine (DACE) in the western approaches to Balabac Strait.

(g) One submarine (HAMMERHEAD) covering the southwestern approaches to Brunei Bay.

(h) One submarine (GUITARRO) in the Sulu Sea.

(i) One submarine in the western Celebes Sea. (No submarine was assigned to this station)

(j) One submarine (HMS TANTIVY) in lower Makassar Straits.

(k) Two submarines (HMS STOIC and HMNS ZWAARDVISCH) in Java Sea.

(l) One submarine (HMS STURDY) in the lower Gulf of Boni.

(m) Two submarines (GURNARD and BATFISH) en route, via Karimata Strait, patrol station Northwest of Borneo to arrive on station about the 19th and 21st of October.

(n) One submarine (BONEFISH) on lifeguard station off Cape Bolinao from October 16th to October 18th.

(o) One submarine (COD) on lifeguard station off Subic Bay from October 16th to October 18th.

(p) One submarine (LAPON) on lifeguard station off Coron Island from October 16th to October 20th.

(q) One submarine (PADDLE) on lifeguard station off Balikpapan.

He arrived at this disposition of submarines as follows:

(a) He was ordered to maintain strong patrols in the western entrances to the Sulu and Celebes Seas. These entrances were, from the south, Balabac Straits, Linapacan Strait, Mindoro Strait and Verde Island Passage. He decided to place one submarine off Balabac Strait (which was reported as having been mined by the Japanese),\* none in

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\* CANFSOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 25th, 1944, Annex M.

Linapacan Strait, two off Cape Calavite (vicinity Mindoro Strait), none in Verde Island Passage (the western approach to which was reported as possibly mined by the Japanese),\* and one in the southern approaches to Palawan Passage; a total of four submarines.

In implementation of this plan he directed the Commanding Officer of the DARTER, who was the commander of the coordinated attack group (wolf pack) composed of the DARTER and the DACE which had been on anti-shiping patrol in Area D6,\*\* to coordinate the patrol of his group so that the southern approaches to Palawan Passage and the western approaches to Balabac Strait were effectively covered,\*\*\* and he directed the BLUEGILL and ANGLER which were on anti-shiping patrol in the Sulu Sea and which he had planned to station off Cape Calavite, to proceed to Area A4.\*\*\*\* He suggested to the Commanding Officer, BLUEGILL who was the commander of this coordinated attack group (wolf pack), that he take station north and south of Lubang Island in order to obtain "southwest coverage approaches to Manila Bay" and advised him that "early advice movements combatant ships important."

By covering the southern approaches to Palawan Channel CTF 71 hoped to provide increased cover for the western entrances to Linapacan and Mindoro Straits against enemy approaches from the southwest. He did this because he realized that Dangerous Ground presented a navigational hazard which forces shipping northerly bound either through the short route via Palawan Channel, or through the much longer route (roughly 300 miles longer) to the westward around Dangerous Ground and because the stationing of the BLUEGILL and ANGLER north and south of Lubang Island left Mindoro Strait without any coverage whatsoever.

These assignments were not sound as they were not strong patrols and did not effectively cover the straits. The thought that CANFSOWESPAC and COMSEVENTHFLT meant by "strong patrols" that the straits be effectively covered is derived from the fact that (1) interdiction means, "the prevention or hindrance by any means of enemy use of an area or route,"\*\*\*\*\* and (2) prompt and early warning cannot be achieved if enemy forces may pass without detection. A study of the charts shows that to cover effectively the western entrances, a minimum of two submarines were required

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\* CANFSOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 25th, 1944, Annex M.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 290826, September 1944 to CTG 71.5 for DACE and DARTER.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110504, October 1944 to CTG 71.1.

\*\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Operation Order 133-44, September 15th, 1944 to ANGLER and CTG 71.1 Operation Order 135-44, September 17th, 1944 to BLUEGILL; CTF dispatch 110807, October 1944 to BLUEGILL and ANGLER.

\*\*\*\*\* Dictionary of United States Military Terms, Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 1950.



at Balabac Strait, one at Linapacan Strait, two at Mindoro Strait and one at Verde Island Passage - a total of six submarines. Had this been done no submarines would have been required in the southern approaches to Palawan Channel for the purpose of effectively covering the western entrances to the Sulu and Celebes Seas. On the other hand, as will be pointed out later, a submarine located in the southern approaches to Palawan Channel would assist in providing prompt and early warning of enemy forces headed northward towards Linapacan and Mindoro Straits and Verde Island Passage.

(b) He was ordered to maintain a strong patrol in Makassar Strait. He directed HMS TANTIVY, which was en route to Area F7 in Makassar Strait, that at dark, October 17th, she was to proceed to patrol that area south of Latitude 2°-00'S until further orders, and was to advise as early as possible of any enemy combatant vessel contacts.\*

This assignment also was not sound as it was not a strong patrol, and not only did not effectively cover the southern deep-water, unmineable channel between Ambo Island and Cape William which at this point was about fifty-five miles wide, but permitted the submarine to operate as far south as 5°-00'S thus providing only limited security against enemy forces. Does it not seem that it would have been wiser to have covered the northern deep-water, unmineable channel between Tanjung Mangkalihah and North Watcher Island which was also about fifty-five miles wide? Is it not clear that if sufficient submarines were stationed here they could prevent any enemy forces passing through without detection, whereas the same submarines, if stationed in the southern channel, could not do so as enemy forces might be able to pass through Borneo Bank? Were not these submarines available in HMS STOIC and HMS STURDY?

A study of the chart shows that a minimum of three submarines was required in either one of these locations.

(c) He was ordered, in coordination with COMSUBPAC to maintain strong patrols in the Hainan-Luzon area. He did not comply with this directive and did not station any patrols in this area. This appears to have been because:

(1) The distance between these islands was 550 miles and required many submarines if the task was to be adequately accomplished.

(2) CTF 17 had been operating submarines in this area for some time and, at the present time (October 10th) had ten submarines operating in the Luzon Strait area which would provide some cover for Luzon Strait westward for many miles. CTF 71's daily submarine plot for October shows that he was familiar with the movement of most of these TF 17 submarines.

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 161229, October 1944 to CTG 71.1 and 71.7 (Z4L/2).



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(3) He did not have sufficient submarines available to provide the submarines necessary if he was to accomplish his other objectives.

(d) He was ordered to give prompt and early warning of movements of enemy forces, particularly major units approaching from the Brunei-Singapore area.

He decided that he would take only limited action regarding forces approaching from this area. A study of the chart shows that a minimum of five submarines were required to patrol effectively the sea area between Anambas Islands and South Natuna Islands, and one between South Natuna Islands and Borneo coast. However, the latter area was reported mined and Allied submarines were directed to remain clear of the channels.\* This was the logical position to station submarines to intercept forces moving north from Singapore. He did not station any submarines here since he could not spare these submarines if he was to accomplish his other objectives,\*\* although it is evident that had he removed some of his submarines from anti-shipping missions he would have had sufficient submarines for this purpose. He did, however, station one submarine, the HAMMERHEAD, to cover the southwestern approaches to Brunei Bay.\*\*\* Why he did not direct this submarine to cover the entrance to Brunei Bay is not known. Certainly there were other approaches to Brunei which could well have been employed by enemy forces. These instructions were given to the HAMMERHEAD because CTF 71 had decided that the most probable route of enemy forces from Singapore would be from the southwest. This, of course, was unwise as a chart study will indicate that enemy forces were equally capable of approaching Brunei Bay from the west and northwest.

It should be noted here that, although CTF 71 did not effectively cover any of the western entrances to the Celebes and Sulu Seas, - in fact he left some of these entrances wide open - did not effectively cover Makassar Strait, and did not station any patrols in the Hainan-Luzon area, his action in not doing so met with the approval of COMSO WESPAC, as well as of COMSEVENTHFLT and CTF 77, for his original dispatch of October 10th giving his submarine dispositions was forwarded by COMSOWESPAC to CINCPQA without change.\*\*\*\* Why COMSOWESPAC approved this disposition is not clear for it should have been apparent to him that the submarines, as located, could not have been fully effective. Perhaps he realized that, with the limited submarines available to CTF 71 and with

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\* CTG 71.1 Operation Order 145-44, October 8th, 1944 to GURNARD.

\*\* Rear Admiral Murray J. Tichenor, USN(Ret), Operations Officer, TF 71 during KING II, Statement February 3rd, 1952, to Commodore R.W. Bates, USN(Ret), Head of World War II Battle Evaluation Group, Naval War College.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110504, October 1944 to CTG 71.1.

\*\*\*\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 111346, October 1944 to CINCPQA.

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the several requirements still to be completed, better coverage could not be expected, and that a calculated risk would have to be taken. Perhaps he was also affected by his intelligence which had forecast that no major elements of the Japanese Fleet would be involved in opposition to the Allied landings at Leyte.\*

That CTF 71 gave considerable weight to his orders concerning "continuing present missions to the fullest extent practicable" is apparent when the locations of seven of the eight American submarines remaining are studied. The BREAM and RATON in Areas A3 and A7 off West Central Luzon;\*\* the ROCK and the BERGALL off the coast of Annam (he advised the ROCK about the enemy's usual trade routes and indicated BERGALL was operating on trade routes nearby);\*\*\* the GUITARRO in the Sulu Sea (he advised the GUITARRO that Japanese shipping driven out of Manila by the Allied air strikes would probably pass east of Palawan Island);\*\*\*\* the GURNARD which was directed to operate in Areas D4 and D7,\*\*\*\*\* and the BATFISH which was directed to operate in Areas D5 and D6;\*\*\*\*\* were primarily engaged in anti-merchant ship operations. After October 16th, the ROCK and BERGALL were assigned additional duty as lifeguard submarines\*\*\*\*\* for China based (Luichow) planes which were searching the South China Sea north of the Camranh Bay-Lingayan line.

This is also apparent when a study of the orders to the British and Netherlands submarines are considered. HMS STOIC\*\*\*\*\* in Area E5 (Java Sea), and HMS STURDY\*\*\*\*\* in Area G7 (Gulf of Boni) were on anti-shipping patrols, HMS STORM\*\*\*\*\* which was en route to relieve the STURDY was to continue the anti-shipping patrols, and the HNMS ZWAARDVISCH was on anti-shipping patrol in Area E8 (Java Sea).\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CTF 77 OpPlan 13-44 (Annex M) September 26th, 1944 brought up to date by CTF 77's Dispatch 160611 October 1944.
  - \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 020906 October 1944 to CTG's 71.1 and 71.7 (Z4L/2).
  - \*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 281048 September 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 140501 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 091238 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 and 71.7 (Z4L/2).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 081102 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 and 71.7 (Z4L/2).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 160656 October 1944 to CTG 71.1.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 031026 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 and 71.7 (Z4L/2).
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 240724 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 and 71.7 (Z4L/2).
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMSUBSEVENTHFLT Serial 00355 December 11th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 260910 September 1944 to CTG 71.1 and 71.7 (Z4L/2).

HMS TANTALUS was en route to anti-shipping patrol vicinity south Anambas Islands.\*

CTF 71 assigned submarines to lifeguard duty as follows:

(a) The BONEFISH was directed to station off Cape Bolinao commencing dawn, October 16th\*\* and continuing through October 18th.

(b) The COD was directed to station off Subic Bay commencing dawn, October 16th\*\*\* and continuing through October 18th.

(c) The LAPON was directed to station just south of Coron Island commencing dawn, October 16th and continuing through October 20th.\*\*\*\*

(d) The PADDLE was directed to proceed immediately to station off Balikpapan where she arrived October 7th.\*\*\*\*\*

(e) All of these submarines were on station as above indicated, at 0719, October 17th.

The following submarines which were retiring from the area had all been on anti-shipping patrols.\*\*\*\*\*

(a) CTG 71.1 BAYA, BECUNA, HAWKBILL, CAVALLA, HOE, FLASHER and CERO.\*\*\*\*\*

(b) CTG 71.7 HMS SEA ROVER, HMS SPITEFUL and HMS TELAMUCHUS.

The preceding analysis of the deployment of the submarines in the SOWESPAC area shows that they were too few in number and too loosely dispersed to accomplish adequately their assigned objectives with relation to operation KING II while at the same time continuing present operations i.e., anti-shipping patrols. There was a reluctance in SOWESPAC, and, as will be shown later in POA also, to limit submarine anti-shipping operations in order to support KING II more effectively. This seems to have been due primarily to the belief that major elements of the Japanese fleet would not be involved in opposition to the Allied landings at Leyte. It may also have been due, in part, to the fact that the mark of success of a submarine commanding officer was often "tonnage of shipping sunk" and he was decorated accordingly. Naturally, many submarine commanding officers did not view with favor those assignments which tended to remove them from the anti-shipping field. In this they

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\* War Diary CTF 71, Daily Dispositions Submarines based western Australia.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110656, October 1944 to BONEFISH.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110658, October 1944 to COD.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110521, October 1944 to LAPON.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 061038, October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L); War Patrol Report PADDLE, Report of SIXTH War Patrol, Serial 018, November 1st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTF 71, October 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CERO transferred October 16th 1944 from TF 71 to TF 72.



JAPANESE NAVAL & MERCHANT SHIP LOSSES<sup>☆</sup>  
 EFFECTED BY T.F. 71 SUBMARINES  
 IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC-SOUTH OF LAT. 18°-30' N.  
 OCTOBER 1944

	OCTOBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL	
<b>SOUTH CHINA SEA</b>																																		
ANGLER															1																			34
ASPRO		1						1																										
BERGALL													1																1					
BLUEGILL																				3														
BONEFISH														1																				
CABRILLA	2						1	1																										
COD						1																												
DACE														2												1								
DARTER																									1									
FLASHER				1																														
GUITARRO																																2		
HAMMERHEAD	3																				2													
LAPON											1																							
RATON																				2														
RAY													1																	1				
ROCK																															1			
HAWKBILL + BAYA								1																										
HAWKBILL + BECUNA										1																								
TOTAL	5	1	0	1	1	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	34		

☆ Sinkings include all merchant ships of 500 or more gross tons and all naval ships.  
 (Prepared by Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee) February 1947.





were often supported by the division, squadron and force commanders, who believed that the correct employment of submarines was against shipping, and not in direct support of fleet operations.\*

This then was the background of the submarine operations in the Southwestern Pacific undertaken by CTF 71 and CTF 72 in support of KING II.

The operations of the SOWESPAC submarines up to 0719, October 17th, 1944 will be discussed as groups assigned to a particular area or as individual submarines depending upon which arrangement appears the more desirable, and will be discussed chronologically as presented in CTF 71's dispatch\*\* wherein he advised COMSEVENTHFLT, as to the disposition of TF 71 submarines. Contacts on shipping will be indicated only if made after October 8th and only if important - in general over 500 tons. (Plate VI).

In discussing these operations the following considerations have been guiding factors:

- (1) Effective average contact ranges.\*\*\*
  - (a) On independent merchant ships.
    - (1) Radar.
      - (a) Surface - six miles.
      - (b) Submerged - none.
    - (2) Periscope - five miles.
    - (3) Sonar - QB/JK, two and one-half miles.  
JP, three and three-quarter miles.
  - (b) On escorted combatant ships.
    - (1) Radar.
      - (a) Surface - ten miles.
      - (b) Submerged - none.
    - (2) Periscope - six miles.
    - (3) Sonar - QB/JK, five and one-half miles.  
JP, seven and one-half miles.

(a) BREAM and RATON:

These submarines, with the GUITARRO, formed a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) which had been ordered to patrol Areas A3 and A7.\*\*\*\* They proceeded independently, patrolling against enemy shipping en route. They made no important contacts. At 0719 October 17th (Diagram I) the BREAM, in Makassar Strait, was bearing 356°(T) distant eighty-five miles from Cape William and, therefore, was about 1000 miles from her

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\* Submarine Patrol Reports and conversations with various submarine staff and commanding officers.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 101426 October 1944 to COMSEVENTHFLT.

\*\*\* Submarine Warfare Instructions, USF-9 Navy Department 1946, page 16-5, paragraph 1604.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 020906 October 1944 to CTG 71.1, 71.7 (Z4L/2).

patrol station, while the RATON in the Sulu Sea was bearing 100°(T) distant seventy-nine miles from the southern tip of Coron Island and, therefore, was about 250 miles from her patrol station. The GUITARRO was detached to independent duty from this group on October 14th and will be discussed separately.

(b) RAY:

This submarine was patrolling Area A4, as the junior ship of a coordinated attack group, consisting of the COD and the RAY.\* On October 11th she was directed by CTF 71 to proceed at dark October 14th to Area A7.\*\* As this area embraces Scarborough Reef, it is assumed that the RAY was to occupy either the station north or the station south of that reef. She was advised in the same dispatch that early advice movements enemy combatant ships was extremely important.\*\*

On October 11th at 0330 she sighted one destroyer off Cape Calavite which she avoided, and, on October 12th in the same area, she sighted at 1315, one cargo ship, the TOKO MARU, with two destroyer escorts. She succeeded in sinking the TOKU MARU with torpedoes at 1439.\*\*\*

On October 14th, while en route to A7 she suffered an operational casualty and was ordered to proceed to Mios Woendi for repairs.\*\*\*\* She took no further part in KING II.

(c) ROCK and BERGALL:

These two submarines were on anti-shipping patrol off Cape Batangan and Cape Varella respectively where they had been operating since late September.\*\*\*\*\* They made but one important contact. This was made by the BERGALL at 0915, October 13th, when she intercepted a convoy of one oiler, one cargo ship and two patrol craft escorts. She succeeded at 1009 in sinking, with torpedoes, the cargo ship which was the SHINCHU MARU.\*\*\*\*\*

On October 16th the ROCK and BERGALL were directed by CTF 71 to

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 270456 September 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).  
 \*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110518 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).  
 \*\*\* War Patrol Report RAY, Report of SIXTH War Patrol, Serial 018, December 8th, 1944; Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II by U.S. Submarines, February 1947, prepared by Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee.  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 140133 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 260841 and 281048 September 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BERGALL, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 0102, November 8th, 1944 also Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II, by U.S. Submarines, February 1947, prepared by Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee.



patrol a line from Cape Varella to North Danger Shoal; the ROCK to patrol to the eastward of 112°-00'E, the BERGALL to the westward thereof.\* Several hours later they were further directed to act, in a sense, as lifeguard for China based search planes which would be searching daily the sea areas north of a line through Latitude 11°-53'N Longitude 109°-07'E, and Latitude 16°-30'N and Longitude 120°-00'E.\*\*

At 0719, October 17th, the ROCK was bearing 101°(T), distant 130 miles from Cape Varella; the BERGALL was bearing 089°(T), distant ninety miles from the same cape.

(d) BLUEGILL and ANGLER:

These submarines had been operating independently on anti-shiping patrols in the Sulu Sea since early October.\*\*\* On October 11th they were directed by dispatch to form a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) under the Commanding Officer, BLUEGILL, and to proceed after dark October 14th, to Area A4. They were advised that early advice movements combatant units important. CTF 71 suggested in this dispatch that they cover the southwest approaches to Manila by taking stations north and south of Lubang Island.\*\*\*\*

In accordance with this directive the wolf pack commander directed the ANGLER to patrol between Lubang Island and Cape Calavite on October 15th through daylight on the 18th. He advised the Commanding Officer, ANGLER that the BLUEGILL would patrol a NW-SE line from the NW coast of Lubang Island to the northern boundary of Area A4, also through daylight on the 18th. He further advised the Commanding Officer, ANGLER that the two submarines would exchange stations on the night of the 18th and would exchange stations every fourth night thereafter.\*\*\*\*\*

The BLUEGILL made no surface contacts of consequence. The ANGLER made three. The first ANGLER contact was made at 0645, October 11th when she encountered a convoy of one oiler, one cargo ship with one escort entering Puerto Princessa, Palawan. She was unable to close the convoy and it escaped.\*\*\*\*\* The second ANGLER contact was made at 0750, October 14th, when she encountered off the west coast of Panay Island a convoy of two transports, one cargo ship escorted by one destroyer escort

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 160456, October 1944 to CTG 71.1.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 160656, October 1944 to CTF 71.1 (Z4L).

\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Operation Order 133-44, September 15th, 1944, to ANGLER and CTG 71.1 Operation Order 135-44, September 17th, 1944 to BLUEGILL.

\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110807, October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 141207, October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of FIFTH War Patrol, Serial 010, November 9th, 1944.

and one trawler type. She sank the transport NARREI MARU with torpedoes.\* The third ANGLER contact was made on October 16th on a Japanese hospital ship which was passing through Calavite Passage en route Manila.\*\*

At 0719, October 17th, the BLUEGILL was bearing 325°(T) distant forty-seven miles from Cape Calavite and the ANGLER was bearing 270°(T) distant five miles from Cape Calavite.

(e) DACE and DARTER:

The DACE and DARTER had been operating as a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) in Area D6 since October 10th under the command of the Commanding Officer, DARTER. At about 2330, October 11th, the wolf pack commander received a dispatch from CTF 71 which directed him to cover effectively the southern approaches to Palawan Passage and the western approaches to Balabac Strait.\*\*\* In compliance with this dispatch, at 0240, October 12th, he directed the Commanding Officer DACE by voice to cover Balabac Strait while he, in the DARTER, covered Palawan Passage at the northern limit of Area D6.\*\*\*\*

At 0719, October 12th, the DARTER contacted a convoy of three oilers, one transport, three cargo ships escorted by two destroyers heading south in Palawan Passage. She attacked at 1024 with torpedoes and claimed having damaged two of the oilers.\*\*\*\* DARTER, in turn, was bombed unsuccessfully by aerial bombs. At 1948 DARTER surfaced and made contact report to DACE and CTF 71. She lost the convoy throughout October 13th, but relocated it through contact report from DACE. Both submarines trailed the convoy throughout the night of October 13th-14th and at 0202, October 14th, DACE attacked with torpedoes. She succeeded in sinking the cargo ships NITTETSU MARU and EIKYO MARU.\* The DARTER and DACE continued trailing this convoy until about 0100, October 15th when the wolf pack commander discontinued further action, as his operations had forced his submarines from their designated stations. He directed the DACE to return to her patrol station off Balabac Strait while he, with the DARTER, returned to his station in southern Palawan Passage and commenced patrolling east of Royal Captain Shoal. His decision to discontinue further action was correct for he had been ordered to cover effectively certain areas and this could not be done if he permitted himself to be drawn away from his objective by the pursuit of merchant targets, even though important.

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\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During World War II by U.S. Submarines, February 1947, prepared by Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee.

\*\* War Patrol Report ANGLER, Report of FIFTH War Patrol, Serial 010, November 9th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110504 October 1944 to CTG 71.1.

\*\*\*\* Patrol Report DARTER, Report of FOURTH War Patrol, Serial 020, November, 1944.



At 0719, October 17th, DACE was bearing 245°(T) distant twenty miles from southern tip Balabac Island. No information is available as to the location of the DARTER at this time as her records were lost but it is presumed that she was on station.

## (f) HAMMERHEAD

The HAMMERHEAD had been on anti-shipping patrol\* in Areas D4 and D7 since September 20th. On October 11th at 2200 while in Area D4 she received a dispatch directing her to cover the southwestern approaches to Brunei Bay.\*\* She immediately proceeded towards Brunei Bay and arrived on station at 0647, October 13th. As will be shown on Diagram "E" the Commanding Officer chose to patrol an area of D7 which averaged about ninety miles from the entrance to Brunei Bay. Why he assumed such a position instead of closing Brunei Bay more closely is not clear. Would he not have been in a far more effective position had he patrolled a station about forty miles due west of Pulau Kuraman Light where he could cover not only the southwest but also the west approaches? Would not such a position have been more in keeping with the spirit of his directive?

During this period the HAMMERHEAD made no contacts. At 0719 October 17th she was bearing 285°(T) distant seventy miles from Pulau Kuraman Light, in the entrance to Brunei Bay.

## (g) GUITARRO:

This submarine was en route to her patrol station having departed Fremantle on October 8th. She was to be part of a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) with the BREAM and RATON which was to operate in Areas A3 and A7. However, on October 14th she was detached from this duty by CTF 71 by dispatch and ordered to anti-shipping patrol in the Sulu Sea south of Latitude 11°-00'N.\*\*\* In this same dispatch CTF 71 advised the Commanding Officer, GUITARRO that he expected that the Allied air strikes on Manila would probably scatter Japanese shipping down the east coast of Palawan.

During the period of this report the GUITARRO was en route to her new station but made no contacts of consequence. At 0719, October 17th, she was bearing 338°(T) distant seventy-five miles from Cape William.

## (h) TANTIVY:

This submarine departed Fremantle October 9th with orders to

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\* CTG 71.1 OpOrder 127-44, September 8th, 1944 to HAMMERHEAD.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110504, October 1944, to CTG 71.1.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 140501, October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).

patrol Area F7. On October 16th, while still en route, the Commanding Officer, TANTIVY, received dispatch orders from CTF 71 directing him to proceed at dark on October 17th and restricting his patrol of F7 (Makassar Strait) to the area south of Latitude 2°-00'S. CTF 71 also directed the Commanding Officer TANTIVY to report as soon as practicable any contacts on enemy combatant ships.\* During this period the TANTIVY made no contacts.

At 0719, October 17th she was still en route and was about nine miles south of Lombok Strait.\*\*

(i) STOIC and ZWAARDVISCH:

These two submarines were on anti-shipping patrol in the Java Sea and were assigned Areas E5\*\*\* and E8\*\*\*\* respectively. The ZWAARDVISCH arrived on station October 3rd; the STOIC on October 12th.

During this period no contacts were made by either submarine. No information is available as to the exact location of these submarines; however, CTF 71's daily submarine plot for October 1944 locates these submarines in about the center of their respective areas from day to day.

(j) STURDY:

This submarine, since about October 5th, had been on anti-shipping patrol in Area G7 and had been operating in Boni Gulf between Saleier Island and Tioro Strait where she was ordered to remain until dark October 14th.\*\*\*\*\* However, she appears to have received orders to remain in this patrol area for sometime longer, for CTF 71's daily plot for October shows her on station until sometime on October 17th. She seems to have made no important contacts during her patrol.

(k) GURNARD and BATFISH:

These two submarines were proceeding independently to their respective patrol stations. The GURNARD, which had departed Fremantle on October 9th, was en route to Areas D4 - D7;\*\*\*\*\* the BATFISH, which had departed Fremantle October 8th, was en route to Areas D5 - D6.

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 161229, October 1944 to CTG 71.1, CTG 71.7 (Z4L/2).  
 \*\* War Patrol Report TANTIVY. Report of SEVENTH War Patrol, no serial, November 4th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 031026, October 1944 to CTG 71.1, CTG 71.7 (Z4L/2).  
 \*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 260910, September 1944 to CTG 71.1, CTG 71.7 (Z4L/2).  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 240724, September 1944 to CTG 71.1, CTG 71.7 (Z4L/2).  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 091238 and 081102, October 1944 to CTG 71.1, CTG 71.7 (Z4L/2).



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They had not arrived on station by 0719 October 1944. They made no important contacts.

(1) Lifeguard Submarines:

(1) BONEFISH

This submarine had been operating with the FLASHER and LAPON as part of a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) in Area A3. The wolf pack had been covering the approaches to Manila with reconnaissance as their primary task.\* The wolf pack was dissolved at about 1900, October 11th, when the FLASHER departed for her base at Fremantle.

At 2247 October 11th, the Commanding Officer, BONEFISH received a dispatch\*\* from CTF 71 assigning him a lifeguard station off Cape Bolinao from dawn, October 16th, through October 18th, He assumed his lifeguard station at 0658, October 16th.

Contacts were made as follows:

(a) At 0935, October 10th, the BONEFISH contacted a large convoy of one oiler and eight cargo ships, escorted by four escorts. She attacked in coordination with the LAPON, and considered that she had damaged two cargo ships with torpedoes.

(b) At 1427, October 11th, she sighted a large convoy of ten ships escorted by five escorts but was unable to reach an attack position.

(c) At 1107, October 14th, she contacted two cargo ships. At 1206, she sank the FUSHIMI MARU\*\*\* with torpedoes.

During her period of lifeguard duty until 0719, October 17th, she received no lifeguard calls.

At 0719, October 17th, she was bearing 330°(T), distant twenty-three miles from Cape Bolinao.

(2) COD

The COD, with the RAY, composed a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) which had been on anti-shipping patrol\*\*\*\* in Area A4 since

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\* War Patrol Report, FLASHER, Report of FOURTH War Patrol Serial 021 October 20th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110656, October 1944 to BONEFISH.

\*\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II by U. S. Submarines, February 1947, Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee.

\*\*\*\* CTG 71.1 Operation Order 134-44 September 17th, 1944, to COD.

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early October.

On October 11th, the Commanding Officer, COD received a dispatch from CTF 71 directing him, at dark, October 14th, to proceed to Area A3 and assume lifeguard duties off Subic Bay on October 16th through October 18th.\*

He assumed the lifeguard station as ordered, but received no lifeguard calls and made no contacts on any important Japanese shipping.

At 0719, October 17th, 1944 the COD was bearing 263°(T) distant twenty-eight miles from Sampaloc Point at the entrance to Subic Bay.

### (3) LAPON

This submarine had been operating with the FLASHER and BONEFISH as part of a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) in Area A3. The wolf pack had been covering the approaches to Manila with reconnaissance as their primary task.\*\* The wolf pack was dissolved at about 1900, October 11th, when the FLASHER departed for her base at Fremantle.

At 0400, October 12th, the Commanding Officer, LAPON received a dispatch from CTF 71 assigning him a lifeguard station off southern tip of Coron Island in the Sulu Sea from dawn, October 16th, through October 20th.\*\*\* The LAPON patrolled north of Scarborough Shoal until 1537 October 14th when she commenced adjusting her position toward her lifeguard station arriving at that station 0617, October 16th.

Contacts were made as follows: At 1113, October 10th, the LAPON contacted, off Cape Bolinao, a large convoy of one oiler and eight cargo ships, escorted by four escorts. She attacked in coordination with the BONEFISH. At 1328 she sank the cargo ship EVIRI MARU\*\*\*\* with torpedoes.

During her period of lifeguard duty until 0719, October 17th, she received no lifeguard calls.

At 0719, October 17th, she was bearing 104°(T) distant twenty-five miles from southern tip Coron Island.

### (4) PADDLE

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110658, October 1944 to COD.

\*\* War Patrol Report, FLASHER, Report of FOURTH War Patrol Serial 021, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 110521, October 1944 to LAPON.

\*\*\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses during World War II by U.S. Submarines, February 1947, prepared by Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee.



This submarine was en route her patrol areas F1, F2 and F3\* when on October 6th CTF 71 directed her to lifeguard station off Balikpapan.\*\* She arrived on her new station, October 7th.

She received but three calls for lifeguard services from October 7th to 0719 October 17th, 1944. That was, one call on October 8th and two calls on October 10th. However, no rescues were accomplished nor any surface contacts of any importance encountered.

At 0719, October 17th, she was bearing 045°(T) distant 170 miles from Balikpapan.

(m) Submarines Retiring From The Area.

While not mentioned in CTF 71's dispatch concerning the planned disposition of his submarines, two submarines, the HAWKBILL and BECUNA, while retiring from the area made a contact on Japanese merchant shipping on October 9th.

These two submarines at 1525 that date, encountered a large convoy about 100 miles west of Mindoro Strait. This convoy consisted of twelve cargo ships, oilers and transports with three P.C. types as escorts. The two submarines attacked with torpedoes and, although they claimed sinking two oilers and one cargo ship, they actually sank but one cargo ship, the TOKUWA MARU.\*\*\*

The HAWKBILL also sighted a small convoy on October 10th off Cape Calavite, but was unable to attack because of enemy planes.

(n) Summary.

It will be observed that CTF 71 did not completely accomplish the assignments of submarines which he had promised COMSEVENTHFLT. Actually, he failed to assign submarines to Scarborough Shoal although the RAY may be considered as one of the two submarines promised; he failed also to assign one to the western Celebes Sea.

CTF 71's decision not to man these stations was due to the limited number of submarines available to him and to the relative lack of importance of these stations. Actually these unoccupied stations would have been of little value in giving prompt and early information concerning the movement of enemy forces; they would, however, have been of somewhat more value in anti-shipping operations.

CTF 71 also failed to insure that certain submarines which he had promised would be on station on October 15th were on station on that date. Among these were the BREAM, RATON, GUITARRO, and TANTIVY. Instead, he retained the routine anti-shipping instructions "Exploit traffic lanes

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\* CTF 71 Dispatch 031209 October 1944 to CTG 71.1, CTG 71.7 (Z4L/2).

\*\* CTF 71 Dispatch 061038 October 1944 to CTG 71.1 (Z4L).

\*\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant losses by U.S. Submarines During World War II, February 1947, Prepared by Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee.



and focal points en route to and from areas,\*\* in the orders of the BREAM, RATON, GUITARRO, and probably of the TANTIVY, without at the same time designating a date on which to arrive on station.

CTF 71 did not advise COMSEVENTHFLT of this omission. While it was not important in this case that this be done, as these submarines were not intended to occupy stations vital to the success of the operation, nevertheless it seems wise to point out here that, at the very least, the immediate superior in the chain of command should be promptly advised when a planned operation cannot be made effective.

### (3) Pacific Ocean Area Forces: (Diagram B)

While COMSOWESPAC was deploying his naval forces for the Leyte Operation, CINCPAC was also deploying his naval forces and was, in part, already accomplishing the "cover and support of the Southwest Pacific" objectives, which he had accepted as his general plan for KING II. He had assigned contributory tasks to all of his forces. These forces embraced the (a) Western Pacific Task Forces, (b) Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, (c) North Pacific Force, (d) South Pacific Force, (e) Marshalls-Gilberts Force, (f) Service Force, Pacific Fleet, (g) Air Force, Pacific Fleet, and (h) The Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas.\*\* However, of these forces, only Task Force 38 of the Western Pacific Task Forces, certain submarines of the Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, and certain units of the Service Force contributed directly to the Battle for Leyte Gulf; the others will be dropped from further discussion except the shore-based Air Force, Central Pacific, which was a sub-force of the Western Pacific Task Forces. This shore-based air force has been discussed previously under Land and Tender-based aircraft. The Service Force will not be discussed separately and will be included where necessary under the Combatant Forces.

The deployment of these naval forces and their accomplishments in support of COMSOWESPAC's objectives up to 0719, October 17th, 1944, was as follows:

#### (a) Task Force 38

TF 38, which had been operating in support of the operations for the seizure of the southern islands of the Palau group by POA forces, and for the seizure of Morotai by SOWESPAC forces, upon completion of its objectives in the above operations, returned, as necessary, to Manus, Saipan, and Ulithi, or remained at sea. Here it rearmed, replenished, and completed plans for the next phase of operations which was strategic support for the seizure of the Leyte-Samar area by Southwest Pacific area forces.\*\*\* TG 38.1 went to Manus; TG 38.2 first went to Saipan and later to Ulithi, where it arrived at 0752, October 1st:\*\*\*\* TG 38.3 went to

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\* CTG 71.1 Operation Orders 141-44, October 5th, to RATON; 137-44, September 29th, to BREAM; and 143-44, October 7th, to GUITARRO.

\*\* CINCPAC-CINCPAC Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report Commander Western Pacific Task Forces and THIRD Fleet on the Operations of their forces during October 1944, Serial 0085, January 26th, 1945.

\*\*\*\* War Diary BUNKER HILL, October 1st, 1944.



Ulithi.\* During this time TG 38.4, which had rearmed and replenished at Manus prior to sorting from there September 24th, remained at sea.\*\*

COMTHIRDFLT directed these groups to sortie at such time as to effect rendezvous with each other at 1700, October 7th, 1944, in Latitude 15°-30'N; Longitude 138°-00'E,\*\*\* and thus form TF 38. This rendezvous point was about 300 miles north of Ulithi. He further directed that, after rendezvousing, TF 38 was to fuel from the fueling group, and was then to commence operations against Okinawa. In accordance with this directive, the task groups of TF 38 operated as follows:

(a) At 1117 October 2nd, TG 38.1 sortied from Seeadler Harbor, Manus Island, and headed in a northwesterly direction for the designated rendezvous.\*\*\*\*

(b) At 1630 October 6th, TG 38.2\*\*\*\*\* less the BUNKER HILL and at 1730, TG 38.3\*\*\*\*\* less the RENO, BIRMINGHAM, DORTCH and HEALY sortied from Ulithi and headed in a northerly direction for the designated rendezvous. COMTHIRDFLT in the NEW JERSEY was in TG 38.2; CTF 38 in the LEXINGTON was in TG 38.3. The BUNKER HILL, RENO, BIRMINGHAM, DORTCH and HEALY sortied at 0604 October 7th and headed for a rendezvous with CTF 38.

(c) Meanwhile, TG 38.4, which, from September 27th to October 5th, had been providing air cover for the forces which had landed on Peleliu and Anguar in the execution of STALEMATE II, had been operating to the westward of the Palau Islands. At 1702\*\*\*\*\* October 5th, this task group headed in a northeasterly direction for the designated rendezvous.

Sometime after 1400 October 7th, the task groups commenced rendezvousing and at 1700 in formation 3W the reformed TF 38 headed for the designated rendezvous with the fueling group, TG 30.8 consisting, in part, at this time, of nine oilers,\*\*\*\*\* with their necessary escorts.

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\* Action Report COMTHIRDFLT, Report on the Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces and THIRD Fleet, Serial 0085, January 26th, 1945.

\*\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas Philippine Islands in support of the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Operation Order 21-44 Dispatch 031600, October 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary COWPENS, October 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary INTREPID, October 6th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 5th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diaries of PLATTE, GUADALUPE, MANATEE, MARIAS, SABINE, MISSISSINEWA, NECHES, SAUGATUCK, CACHE, October 8th, 1944.

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Rendezvous was effected at 0600, October 8th, 1944, in the vicinity of Latitude 19°-00'N, Longitude 139°-00'E and fueling was commenced immediately. Owing to heavy swells and moderately rough seas because of the effects of a passing typhoon, the fueling operation was prolonged until 1955.\* At this time TF 38 was reformed and headed for Latitude 21°-00'N, Longitude 137°-00'E preparatory to commencing high speed run on Okinawa.

The movements of TF 38 at this time were covered, in part, by limited patrol plane searches from Palau and from Tinian conducted by CTG 30.5 (COMFAIRWING ONE), for, as has been pointed out under operations of TF 17, the submarines which were to be on station off the eastern entrance to the Inland Sea (Bungo Suido) on October 10th,\*\* did not arrive there until October 12th,\*\*\* and of the two to be off Tokyo Bay, but one was on station.\*\*\*\* Thus, for two days, COMTHIRDFLT appears to have operated on the incorrect premise that Allied submarines were on station in the Japanese area, and that his northern flank was therefore covered. His movements were also covered by gunfire attack commencing at 0421, October 9th on Marcus Island. This attack, which was made by TG 30.2 (a cruiser-destroyer force) commanded by Rear Admiral Allan E. Smith, U. S. Navy, was intended to operate as a diversion, but, although the attack was successfully accomplished, its diversionary effect was completely negative. In fact, the Japanese gave it no more than passing attention.

In this connection, it is of interest that the only apparent diversion at this time was caused by the shooting down, at 0845, October 9th, 1944, in Latitude 23°-45'N, Longitude 137°-30'E, of a Japanese patrol plane by an American patrol plane of VPB-102 based at Tinian as has been pointed out previously. This plane was shot down in a position 580 miles southeast of the southern tip of Kyushu Island, and about 225 miles northeast of TF 38, which, at this time, was en route to its launching position off Okinawa. The Japanese pilot failed to advise that he was engaging an Allied patrol plane. The Commander Sasebo Naval District, noting the plane's disappearance, and concluding that it had been destroyed by an American carrier task force in the vicinity, awakened to possible Allied action against Kyushu Island and Nansei Shoto. He promptly

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\* War Diaries of PLATTE, GUADALUPE, MANATEE, MARIAS, SABINE, MISSISSINAWA, NECHES, SAUGATUCK, CACHE, October 8th, 1944.

\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 262316, September 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\* War Patrol Reports, BESUGO, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944; GABILAN, Serial 031, November 13th, 1944 to RONQUIL, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report SEA DEVIL, Report of FIRST War Patrol, no file, no serial, no date, but presumed to be October or November, 1944.

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alerted the naval units in those areas, directing them to tighten their air raid alerts, especially at dawn, in order to minimize damage by enemy attack.\* This shows clearly how often destiny may hinge on the most unexpected developments!

COMTHIRDFLT advised CINCPAA at this time that if the passing typhoon should create a golden opportunity to strike the Kyushu area, he had an alternate plan to strike that area in lieu of Okinawa.\*\* It is of interest to note that such an attack would not have been the golden opportunity conceived by COMTHIRDFLT for the Japanese in that area were alerted to the possibility of such an air strike and were prepared to resist it.\*\*\*

At 1200, October 9th, TF 38 was in Latitude 20°-51'N, Longitude 135°-00'E. At 1236 it was on course 300°(T), speed twenty-three knots.

(1) Attack on the Nansei Shoto, October 10th:

At 0538, October 10th, in a mean position bearing about 142°(T), distant approximately 130 miles southeast of the southern tip of Okinawa, TF 38 commenced launching its attack. The flying conditions were excellent with surface winds from the northeast of thirteen to eighteen knots. Cumulus clouds covering from 2/10 to 5/10 of the sky were present, with an average base of 3,000 feet and an average top of 5,000 feet. The visibility was unrestricted.\*\*\*\* Sunrise was at 0625.

The attack was, in general, a fighter sweep, followed by four major air strikes (ABLE, BAKER, CHARLIE and DOG). In addition, several small fighter sweeps and several small air strikes and air searches were made on certain specific targets - notably on Amami O Shima and the Diato Shimas to the east, Kume Shima and Kerema Retto to the west, and Miyako Jima to the southwest.\*\*\*\*\* The fighter sweep was designed to gain command of the air over Okinawa. It encountered little enemy opposition over that island.

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104; also Detailed Action Report ORUKU (on Okinawa) Detachment, 901st Naval Air Group, October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 160369, NA12366.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 060712, October 1944, to CINCPAA.

\*\*\* Commander Sasebo Naval Base Dispatch 100100, October 1944 to all units Sasebo Naval District, WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\*\* Action Report FRANKLIN, Operations against the enemy at Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, Serial 0039, October 31st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Reports of the Carriers Concerned.

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In the above strikes TF 38 commenced launching planes on combat missions as follows:

<u>Time</u>					<u>Total</u>
(a) 0538 Fighter Sweeps:	164 VF	3 VF(P)			167
(b) 0538 Strike ABLE:	81 VF	5 VF(P)	106 VB	84 VT	276
(c) 0745 Strike BAKER:	92 VF	6 VF(P)	99 VB	81 VT	278
(d) 1015 Strike CHARLIE:	110 VF	6 VF(P)	101 VB	86 VT	303
(e) 1222 Strike DOG:	114 VF	3 VF(P)	93 VB	73 VT	283
(f) Miscellaneous Strikes and Searches:	66 VF	3 VF(P)	14 VB	6 VT	<u>89</u>
(g) Total Sorties:	.....				1396*

The armament consisted, in general, of bombs and rockets for all planes, although in some cases, the torpedo planes were armed with torpedoes rather than with bombs.

These strikes were highly successful. The Japanese lost, according to CTF 38, eighty-eight aircraft destroyed on the ground or in the water, and twenty-three destroyed in the air - a total of 111 aircraft. Also, many small ships were claimed sunk, destroyed, or damaged. Among these were one submarine depot ship (JINGEI), one mine sweeper, one destroyer escort, one small escort vessel, two 100-foot mine craft, four midget submarines, four medium cargo ships, and numerous smaller craft. Considerable destruction was reported at Naha City, Naha Airfield, Itomen, Yontan San, Yontan South, Unten Ko, and Ke Shima.\*\* This damage was confirmed to a degree by the Japanese.\*\*\*

The American claims here appear to have been somewhat under-estimated in regard to sinkings of Japanese small craft and the destruction of Japanese facilities, for the Japanese admitted losing one submarine depot

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\* Action Reports WASP, HORNET, MONTEREY, INTREPID, BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, ESSEX, LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, FRANKLIN, SAN JACINTO, ENTERPRISE; also aircraft Action Reports Air Groups 7,8,11,13,14,15,18,19,20,27,28,51, Attacks on Nansei Shoto, October 10th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTF 38, Summary of TF 38 Operations August 29th-October 30th, 1944, Serial 00505, November 3rd, 1944, page 28.

\*\*\* War Diary 25th Air Flotilla, October 1944; also 25th Air Flotilla Dispatches 110100 and 110230 October 1944, WDC Document 160137, NA 12278.



ship, twelve torpedo boats, two midget submarines, four non-military ships, aggregating 11,100 tons, and numerous powered sailing craft.\* They appear somewhat excessive in regard to Japanese planes destroyed, for the Japanese reported losing thirty-one naval planes on the ground and in the air over Okinawa and five naval patrol planes at sea on search missions, a total of thirty-six naval planes.\*\* The Japanese also reported that all army fighter planes - number unknown - were believed destroyed in interception or on the ground.\*\*

No Japanese reports are available concerning their air losses in the lesser islands of the Nansei Shoto.

In making these strikes, TF 38 lost eight VF, one VF(N), six VB and six VT, of which at least six were jettisoned.\*\*\* This coincides closely with the Japanese claims of twelve American planes shot down.\* TF 38 had five pilots and four aircrewmembers lost or missing. In addition, the life-guard submarine STERLET, off southeast Okinawa, recovered four pilots and two aircrewmembers.

Besides making the above strikes, CTF 38 made three limited searches by VF and VB/VT planes to a radius of 275 miles. One search (six VF - three VB) from the HORNET, departing at 0605 and returning at 1027, covered the sector between 250°(T) and 280°(T), including Miyako Jima and Ishikagi Jima;\*\*\*\* a second search and attack group (seventeen VF - six VB - six VT) from the HANCOCK, departing at 0550 and returning at 1010, covered the sector between 345°(T) to 030°(T) including Amami O Shima;\*\*\*\*\* a third search (five VF - five VB) from the LEXINGTON, departing at 1258 and returning about 1720, covered the sector between 015°(T) and 060°(T), including Minami Daito Shima.\*\*\*\*\* These searches were reasonably effective, especially that at Miyako Jima, where considerable Japanese installations, both air and ground, were discovered, and a large number of planes and some shipping were destroyed. It appears, however, that the morning searches were designed to search only the vicinity of the less important

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104, pages 4 and 5.

\*\* War Diary 25th Air Flotilla, October 1944; also 25th Air Flotilla Dispatches 102302 and 110136, October 1944, WDC Document 160137, NA 12278.

\*\*\* Aircraft Action Reports Air Groups 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 44.

\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 11, forwarded by HORNET, Serial 0031, November 8th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 7, forwarded by HANCOCK, Serial 0100, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report LEXINGTON, Attacks on Nansei Shoto Group, October 10th, 1944, Serial 0281, November 7th, 1944.



islands of the Nansei Shoto, and were not designed to discover any major portion of the enemy fleet, the destruction of which would have accomplished the primary task of TF 38, as assigned by CINCPQA.\* It is possible that the afternoon search by the LEXINGTON planes was made for this latter purpose, but the sector searched (015°(T) - 060°(T)), the radius of the search - 275 miles - and the armament of the search planes - two 500 pound bombs - would indicate otherwise. Would it not have been wiser had CTF 38, or COMTHIRDFLT who was in company, made a dawn search to at least 350 miles covering a sector of about 270°(T) clockwise through about 045°(T), in order to guard against surprise, and in order to discover any movement of a "major portion of the enemy fleet" within the search area? Such a search would have reached to within about fifty miles of the north-east tip of Formosa, and would have covered the eastern half of the East China Sea, up to within fifty miles of the southern tip of Kyushu Island. Sufficient planes were available within TF 38 to have made this search, and in addition, to have accomplished the planned operations. Such a dawn search would not necessarily have disclosed prematurely the presence of naval aircraft or the carrier force in the area since the air strikes against Okinawa were dawn air strikes and therefore would strike Okinawa long before the search planes had reached the outer limits of their searches.

It seems well to point out, at this time, that it is a well known strategic consideration that if it is desired to bring an enemy fleet into a vulnerable position, something that the enemy values must be threatened or captured. Such an operation might cause the enemy to expose his fleet in order to remove the threat or to recapture the valued positions. It would appear as if the Nansei Shoto and in particular, Okinawa, might well have been such a vulnerable position. Although the Japanese did not, in fact, react with their fleet, they did at 0925, October 10th, alert the shore-based air forces for the defense of the Formosa-Nansei Shoto-Southern Kyushu area (SHO Two), and at 1204 they alerted, in addition, the shore-based air forces for the defense of the Philippines (SHO One). They also moved aircraft in strength into Southern Kyushu and ordered the operational air strength of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR to prepare for land-based air operations.\*\*

In view of the obvious importance of the Nansei Shoto to the defense of the Japanese Empire, would it not have been wise therefore had CTF 38, or COMTHIRDFLT who was in company, directed a similar search in the afternoon to discover whether the attack on the Nansei Shoto had

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\* CINCPAC-CINCPQA's Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944  
Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947  
Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104,  
pages 4 and 5.



forced the enemy carrier forces believed to be in the Empire, but which might well have been in the Nansei Shoto area, to take offensive action against TF 38, and have thereby created the opportunity for the destruction of a major portion of the enemy fleet desired by CINCPAC in his basic orders to the Commander Western Pacific Task Forces?\* Was not such an offensive action by Japanese carrier forces operating in conjunction with land-based planes from the Nansei Shoto a distinct and dangerous enemy capability?

The above comments, and the comments on the lack of an adequate dawn search, are of particular importance when it is remembered that COMTHIRDFLT had previously disagreed with CINCPAC's disposition of TF 17 submarines, because, in his opinion, they were not properly located to prevent the sortie of the Japanese carrier force without discovery. Since CINCPAC did not change this unsatisfactory disposition, it is presumed that COMTHIRDFLT continued to feel that his northern flank was not adequately protected.

The fact that the Japanese did not plan to engage TF 38 with their carrier force unsupported by their battleship force, which, at the time was roughly 2500 miles away in the Lingga-Singapore area, but instead, planned to employ their carrier planes from land bases,\*\* does not in any way weaken the strength of this comment, for this Japanese plan was not available to COMTHIRDFLT or CTF 38 at this time.

Perhaps COMTHIRDFLT had received certain intelligence, not available to this study, which indicated that the Japanese surface forces did not intend to sortie from the Empire at this time, and therefore thought that it was not necessary to extend his search to the eastern half of the East China Sea. Perhaps he was influenced by the opinion not only of COMSEVENTHFLT, but also of COMSOWESPAC, that major elements of the Japanese Combined Fleet would not be involved in opposition to the Allied landings at Leyte. In this connection it seems important to point out that complete reliance should not normally be placed on intelligence received, because such information is not always complete, is often inaccurate, and is frequently misleading. Although Allied intelligence was known to be generally excellent, it was not always so and should not have been relied on fully since, by so doing, the commander might find himself placing too much reliance on its usual accuracy, and unconsciously basing his plans and operations on enemy intentions, rather than enemy capabilities.

Throughout the day the task groups of TF 38 maintained, in general, a combat air patrol (CAP) over each task group of about twelve VF planes,

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\* CINCPAC-CINCPAC's Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104, pages 4 and 5.



and a snooper anti-submarine patrol (SNASP) of about four VF - four VT planes, although toward evening TG 38.2 increased its CAP to about twenty-seven planes.

Upon completion of the operations against the Nansei Shoto, and after recovering Strike Group DOG about 1745, CTF 38 then headed on course of 190°(T) at twenty-five knots towards his designated rendezvous with the Fueling Group - Latitude 20 -00'N, Longitude 128 -00'E.\* Sunset was at 1758.

(2) Attack on Aparri Airfield, Luzon, P.I., October 11th (D-9)

Throughout the night of October 10th-11th several bogies appeared on the radar screens, but although night fighters were vectored out, they failed to make contact.

At 0600, TF 38 rendezvoused with the Fueling Group. Sunrise was at 0619. At about 0700 TF 38 commenced fueling, taking both aviation gasoline and fuel oil from twelve oilers. Three tankers were assigned to each task group. Fueling conditions were good.\*\* CTF 38 set the fueling course at 260°(T). This was in the direction of northeastern Luzon and was designed to deceive the enemy as to the next objective.\*\*\*

At about 1240, CTF 38 commenced launching an air strike of twenty-nine VF - four VF(P) from CTG 38.1, and of twenty-six VF - two VF(P) from TG 38.4 - a total of fifty-five VF - six VF(P), against the Japanese airfield at Aparri, Luzon, P.I.,\*\*\*\* bearing about 255°(T) distant about 323 miles from mean position of the task force. Twenty-two of these planes were armed with rockets.\*\*\*\* Flying conditions were good. Cumulus clouds covered 3/10 of the sky. Visibility was fifteen miles. The wind was northeasterly, twelve - fifteen knots. The sea was slight.\*\*\*\*\* This strike, which hit at 1415, and was unopposed, was highly effective, and according to CTF 38, destroyed fifteen enemy aircraft on the ground, as well as fuel dumps and several buildings.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary NEW JERSEY October 10th, 1944.

\*\* War Diaries, SEBEC, PAMANSET, TAPPAHANNOCK, MANATEE, MISSISSINEWA, SABINE, GUADALUPE, PLATTE, NECHES, SCHUYLKILL, ESCAMBIA and CHIKASKIA, October 11th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT, October 11th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Reports WASP, HORNET, COWPENS, MONTEREY, FRANKLIN, BELLEAU WOOD; also Aircraft Action Reports Air Groups 11, 13, 14, 21, 22, 28. Attacks on Nansei Shoto, October 10th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Action against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, and Luzon and the Visayas, Philippine Islands October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTF 38, Summary of TF 38 Operations, August 29th - October 30th, 1944, Serial 00505, November 3rd, 1944, pages 31 and 32.



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One VF and pilot were lost in this strike.\* Also, three VF and three VT were jettisoned as a result of a deck crash of a returning fighter.\*\*

At 1402 the Commanding Officer, BUNKER HILL - Latitude 19°-55'N, Longitude 126°-40'E - launched an air search of eight VF, armed with one 500-pound general purpose bomb each to search the sector 270°(T) - 300°(T) to a distance of 250 miles. This search which covered both the Balintang Channel and the Bashi Channel, and which returned on board at 1731, was designed to discover whether any Japanese shipping was in the area of search, as it was through a nearby area that CTF 38 planned to approach Formosa. The search was negative. However, it did shoot down one two-engine land bomber at about 1600.\*\*\* Except for the above extremely limited search, no searches were made by CTF 38 on October 11th.

During the afternoon the escort carriers NASSAU, STEAMER BAY and SITKOH BAY, which were with the fueling group, transferred thirty-six VF, four VF(N), seven VB and fourteen VT to the carriers of TF 38; also three replacement pilots and eleven aircrewmembers.\*\*\*\*

Throughout the day the task groups of TF 38 maintained, in general, a combat air patrol over each task group of about eight VF planes, and a snoop anti-submarine patrol of about four VF - four VB/VT planes, although TG 38.1 maintained a CAP of twenty VF. During the day and early evening hours the CAP shot down three enemy land attack aircraft, one within twenty-five miles of the task force. Sunset was at 1816; evening twilight ended at 1940.

Fueling of the task force was completed at 1748.\*\*\*\*\* After recovering planes at 1722 the fleet course was changed radically through sixty degrees to the right to 320°(T), and fleet speed was increased radically from the fueling speed of twelve knots to the approach speed of twenty-four knots. This headed the task force toward the Formosa launching position.\*\*\*\*\*

After sundown, numerous bogies appeared on the screens of the various task groups. However, none approached closer than fourteen miles.\*\*\*\*\* Although night fighters were vectored out, no enemy planes were shot down.

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\* War Diary COWPENS, October 11th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary INDEPENDENCE, October 11th, 1944.

\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 8, forwarded by BUNKER HILL, Serial 0304, October 30th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diaries RUDYERD BAY, NEHENTA BAY, NASSAU, STEAMER BAY, and SITKOH BAY, October 11th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary TAPPAHANNOCK, October 11th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT, October 11th, 1944.

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It seemed clear, at this time, at least to the Commanding Officer of the CABOT, that the Japanese had located TF 38 within acceptable limits, for he reported, "several bogies shadowed our disposition and our approach was detected."\* This was a correct analysis, for the Japanese had contacted TF 38 during the night and early morning and realized that Formosa might be attacked.\*\*

(3) Battle off Formosa, October 12th, 13th and 14th:  
(known by Japanese as Battle of Formosa)

(a) Operations on October 12th:

As TF 38 proceeded towards Formosa in formation 3W axis 060°(T) with order of task groups from north to south: TG 38.2, TG 38.3, TG 38.1 and TG 38.4, radar contacts indicated that the force was being continuously shadowed.\*\*\* As a consequence, CTF 38 felt that "the enemy knew we were coming."\*\*\*\* In this he was correct, for at 0340 a general air raid alert was ordered throughout Formosa.\*\* CTF 38 appears to have expected a dawn air attack upon his task force. However, TF 38 arrived on schedule in its launching position about fifty - ninety miles east of Formosa, and, as the dawn attack by the enemy did not develop, it commenced launching its initial attack at 0544 without any interference whatsoever. Sunrise was at 0647.

The flying conditions were average with surface winds from the northeast of sixteen to twenty-seven knots. Cumulus clouds covering 2/10 of the sky prevailed throughout the day, excepting during the afternoon from 1200 to 1800 when these clouds covered 7/10 of the sky. The visibility was about fifteen miles; the sea was slight.\*\*\*\*\* Over the target weather conditions were generally good in southern Formosa, and generally bad in northern Formosa, with a cold front approaching from west.\*\*\*\*\* As in the Nansei Shoto attacks, this attack was, in general,

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\* War Diary CABOT, October 11th, 1944.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Air Action October 12th, Department of Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas Philippine Islands in support of the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTF 38, Summary of TF 38 Operations, August 29th-October 30th, 1944, Serial 00505, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Action against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, and Luzon and the Visayas, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944. Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary BUNKER HILL, October 11th, 1944.



a dawn fighter sweep followed by four major air strikes, (ABLE, BAKER, CHARLIE and DOG), although two additional mid-morning fighter sweeps and two small air searches were interposed between the above strikes. The dawn fighter sweep was designed to gain command of the air over Formosa and the Pescadores Islands; the mid-morning fighter sweeps were designed to reduce the enemy air opposition for succeeding strikes, and to increase the destruction wrought by the preceding strikes in certain designated areas, notably northern Formosa, Matsuyama Airfield, Takao shipping, Feito Airfield, Kagi Airfield, Karenko ground installations, and other targets in the same area.

In the above strikes TF 38 commenced launching planes on combat missions as follows:

<u>Time</u>					<u>Total</u>
(a) 0544 Fighter Sweep:	199 VF	4 VF(P)			203
(b) 0555 Strike ABLE:	106 VF	9 VF(P)	107 VB	92 VT	314
(c) 0800 Strike BAKER:	90 VF	8 VF(P)	101 VB	74 VT	273
(d) 1050 Strike CHARLIE:	114 VF	2 VF(P)	90 VB	77 VT	283
(e) 1315 Strike DOG:	119 VF	4 VF(P)	92 VB	62 VT	277
(f) Miscellaneous Strikes and Searches:	22 VF	1 VF(P) 2 VF(N)	3 VB		26 <u>2</u>
(g) Total Sorties and Searches:	.....				1378*

The armament consisted, generally, of bombs and rockets, although, in a limited number of cases, the torpedo planes were armed with torpedoes rather than with bombs.

Surprise was not achieved. As has been pointed out earlier, this was primarily due to the fact that the attacks on the Nansei Shoto had caused the Japanese to alert their base air forces for both the SHO One and SHO Two Operations. It may have also been due to the fact that as early as October 4th the Japanese had received intelligence that the American Navy was planning to isolate the Philippines by a big carrier

\* Action Reports WASP, HORNET, MONTEREY, INTREPID, BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, ESSEX, LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, FRANKLIN, SAN JACINTO, ENTERPRISE; also Aircraft Action Reports Air Groups 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 27, 28, 51, Attacks on Nansei Shoto, October 10th, 1944.



air attack on Formosa, and that this attack was to be supported by the American FOURTEENTH and TWENTIETH Air Forces, operating from China bases.\*

The attack on Aparri, which, with the fueling course towards north-eastern Luzon, COMTHIRDFLT had intended as a diversion to confuse the enemy as to his next target and to indicate that it was Luzon, failed, for the American planes were met by large numbers of enemy planes and determined air opposition, as well as by strong anti-aircraft fire.\*\* The Japanese had gone on a general air raid alert at 0340.\*\*\*

Despite this opposition the American planes pressed home their attacks, and achieved very successful results, albeit with considerably higher losses than were received in the Nansei Shoto operation. Plane losses received by TF 38 from all causes were: twenty VF, two VF(P), three VF(N), fourteen VB, nine VT, or a total of forty-eight planes, some of which were jettisoned. The lifeguard submarine SAILFISH, off southwest Formosa, recovered six pilots and five aircrewmen; the TRIGGER, off northeast Formosa recovered one pilot.\*\*\*\* Other pilots and aircrewmen were recovered by TF 38. Personnel losses were heavy, a total of twenty-nine pilots and twenty-one aircrewmen being counted lost or missing.\*\*\*\*\*

The attack on Formosa was the third of a series of air strikes against Japanese power in the Nansei Shoto, Formosa and northern Luzon areas, which strikes as has been pointed out previously, were designed to provide support to the forthcoming operations by COMSOWESPAC for the seizure of Leyte Island. Formosa was recognized as a very powerful bastion, and serious opposition to air attacks was expected.\*\*\*\*\* Might it not have been preferable, therefore, had COMTHIRDFLT postponed fueling, and, instead, attacked Formosa on October 11th rather than Aparri? By attacking Aparri with nothing but fighters, and by remaining

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\* Material for Situation Estimates, First Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC 216764 (microfilm).

\*\* Action Report COMTHIRDFLT, Report of the Operations of Western Pacific Task Forces and THIRD Fleet, Serial 0085, January 25th, 1945.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947 Air Action, October 12th, Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report SAILFISH Report of TWELFTH War Patrol, Serial 057, December 11th, 1944; War Patrol Report TRIGGER of TENTH War Patrol, Serial 033, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Reports, WASP, HORNET, COWPENS, INTREPID, BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, ESSEX, LEXINGTON, LANGLEY, FRANKLIN, ENTERPRISE, BELLEAU WOOD; also Aircraft Action Reports Air Groups 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 44, Attacks on Nansei Shoto, October 10th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 38 Operation Order 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944.



in the fueling area throughout daylight on the 11th - which fueling area was bearing about 075°(T), distant about 320 miles from Aparri and about 110°(T), distant about 370 miles from Garan Bi, the southern extremity of Formosa - COMTHIRDFLT indicated to the Japanese, who knew the location of TF 38 with reasonable accuracy,\* that his next attack might well be on Formosa rather than on Luzon. In addition, the day's delay occasioned by the fueling and the fighter strikes on Aparri on October 11th, gave the Japanese an additional day to appraise the situation and to determine whether these carrier strikes were, in effect, nothing but raids, seriously destructive if it is true, but still raids, or whether they were the vanguard of an amphibious operation designed to seize some vital area of the Nansei Shoto-Formosa-Philippine Island chain.

This view is supported by Japanese records which state that there were no special air alerts on Formosa during October 11th, but there was a special air alert on Formosa at 0334 October 12th.\*\*

That COMTHIRDFLT also concurs with this view is clear, for he wrote later: "The fundamental mistake was mine: I should have struck Formosa first; not only was it stronger, but it had been alerted by the Nansei Shoto strikes."\*\*\* Evidently, in the opinion of COMTHIRDFLT, the fueling on the 11th, which was ordered in the basic plan, could have been postponed without seriously affecting his freedom of action. This opinion is borne out by a study of the cruising radii of the principal ships of TF 38. The CL's and CA's had the lowest cruising radii of the principal ships. Allowing for a 40% fuel reserve, and assuming that the general operating speed of the task groups was twenty-five knots,\*\*\*\* these cruisers had a cruising endurance of at least four and one-half days. This would have permitted continuous operations throughout the 12th, with refueling probably necessary on the 13th. Actually, the general operating speed of the task groups was somewhat less than twenty-five knots, with a consequent increase in cruising radii. The destroyers, and probably the WICHITA, would in general have required one refueling from the combatant ships during this time. Aviation gasoline, while important, was not a governing factor.

In addition to the above strikes, CTF 38 made two limited searches. One search by four VF and three VB planes from the ESSEX, departing at

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\* COMSOWESPAC Dispatch 111258, October 1944, to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160264, NA 12546.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, Kobi Naval Air Group, October 12th, 1944, WDC Document 160495.

\*\*\* Fleet Admiral W.F. Halsey and Lt. Comdr. J. Bryan III, USNR, Admiral Halsey's Story, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1947, page 205.

\*\*\*\* War Service Fuel Consumption of U.S. Naval Surface Vessels, FTP 218 September 1st, 1945.



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0653 and returning aboard at 1138, covered the sector between 050°(T) and 080°(T), to a distance of 275 miles. The objectives of this search were (a) the discovery of any enemy shipping and (b) the reconnoitering of Miyako Jima. The search was negative, excepting that one additional new airfield was discovered on Miyako Jima.\* One land attack plane was shot down at 0825 and one two-engine land bomber at 0940.\* The other search by two VF(N) planes from the HANCOCK, departing at 0700 and returning aboard at 1150, covered the sector 220°(T) to 250°(T), to a distance of 250 miles.\*\* The objective of this search was the discovery of enemy shipping. No shipping was found.

Why COMTHIRDFLT did not consider it advisable to make any protective searches to discover whether or not his operations had enticed the Japanese carrier force out of the Inland Sea, is not clear. Perhaps he felt that submarine reconnaissance would keep him advised as to enemy movements from the Empire - and particularly from the Inland Sea, but this is doubtful as he had previously indicated to CINCPQA the necessity for increasing the submarines in the Empire areas to insure advanced information concerning any enemy sorties. Perhaps he thought that searches by American planes from Saipan would screen him. However, diagram "B" shows that the POA submarines before October 12th were not strategically located to discover, with reasonable effectiveness, the movements of Japanese naval forces toward Formosa, and, in addition, shows that the limiting radius of the Saipan based searches was roughly 200 miles short of Okinawa, thus leaving a vast area of navigable water between Kyushu and Formosa entirely unsearched by American aircraft. Perhaps he expected to hear of enemy movements from CINCPQA whose intelligence in the past had been surprisingly accurate. But here again there was danger, for no one could foretell when the enemy might succeed in operating in secrecy. Even though the operation appeared to be proceeding according to plan, was there not reason to view the unfolding situation with intelligent suspicion? Was it not an enemy capability to have moved his carriers secretly into the area whence his planes, operating in conjunction with the Formosa based planes, might have operated directly from the carriers against TF 38, or indirectly by staging through Formosa fields?

Throughout the day TF 38 maintained, in general, a combat air patrol (CAP) over each task group of twelve to sixteen VF and a snoop anti-submarine patrol (SNASP) of about four VF - four VT planes. The CAP

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\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 15, forwarded by ESSEX, Serial 024, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\* Action Report HANCOCK, Report October 6th-31st, 1944, Serial 0100, November 3rd, 1944.

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claimed having shot down near the force a total of fifteen planes of various types.\*

On numerous occasions during daylight hours, the various task groups contacted enemy aircraft by radar, showing clearly that TF 38 was being continuously snooped by enemy planes. Although a number of these snoopers were shot down, the enemy persisted in continuing the snooping operations.\*\* While all of the reasons for this may not have been entirely clear to CTF 38, or to COMTHIRDFLT, one reason became obvious as night fell, for commencing at about 1900 and continuing steadily through most of the night, the Japanese launched numerous torpedo plane raids, as well as harassing operations, against the task groups of TF 38, concentrating mostly on TG 38.2 which was northernmost, and therefore nearest Formosa. These raids employed both "window"\*\*\* and "flares" to confuse the task groups.\*\*\*\* Many of the raids closed to within gunfire range of the screens, but were driven off without succeeding in making a single torpedo hit or accomplishing any material damage whatsoever.

By midnight TG 38.2 had destroyed nine enemy planes by AA fire,\*\*\*\*\* TG 38.3 one,\*\*\*\*\* and TG 38.4 two\*\*\*\*\* - a total of twelve planes. This was a modest estimate for the Japanese admitted losing forty-two planes.\*\*\*\*\* It is assumed that the larger portion of these forty-two

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- \* Operational Summaries of Carrier Strikes, COMTHIRDFLT, Serial 0074, October 27th, 1944.
  - \*\* Action Reports CTG 38.1, Serial 00101, December 1944; CTG 38.3, Serial 0091, December 8th, 1944; CTG 38.4, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944 and War Diary COMCARDIV 4 (CTG 38.2), October 12th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Window is the name for strips of frequency-cut foil, wire or bars, usually dropped from planes or expelled from shells or rockets as a radar countermeasure. (Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, June 1950).
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas Philippine Islands in support of the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.2, Report October 6th-November 3rd, 1944, Serial 0040, November 8th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report MOBILE, Carrier Air Strikes on Formosa and the Pescadores, and Enemy Air Attacks on Task Force 38, October 12th-13th, 1944, Serial 0025, October 21st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report GRIDLEY, Serial 027, October 28th, 1944; also Action Report BAGLEY, Serial 054, October 31st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group; Searches and Patrols of "Fs" (Shinchiku) Sector, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579, NA 12297; also Memorandum notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



planes were unable to return to base because of gunfire damage or operational failures and crashed at sea beyond the range of visibility of TF 38. The Japanese admitted the loss of fifty-seven planes during the attacks on Formosa.

Despite (a) the strong initial opposition encountered at Formosa (although this opposition fell off markedly during the day as a result of the American air strikes),\* (b) the probable flying in of replacements during the night which would increase the Japanese defensive power, and (c) the fact that the location of his command was not only accurately known to the Japanese, but was even now under continued night torpedo attack, COMTHIRDFLT made preparations to continue the planned attacks on the following day. That this decision was correct is evident, for the primary objective of the air strikes against Formosa was the denial of that base as a staging point to Japanese aircraft. Such aircraft presently there, or such aircraft which might be moved there from northern bases, or even from the Empire, must be prevented from proceeding south to interfere with the Allied landings at Leyte. Should this objective be successfully accomplished, the interference with the Leyte landings would necessarily be heavily reduced. COMTHIRDFLT hoped to accomplish this by the destruction of enemy aircraft, aircraft and port facilities, ground installations, and shipping.\*\* This was in accordance with his directive from CINCPAC which stated, in part, "advisable inflict lasting damage on installations and port facilities in Formosa."\*\*\*

From reports of his pilots COMTHIRDFLT was aware that his strikes that day had been extremely successful, but he was also aware that despite this success, the above objective had only been partially accomplished. He realized that there was much more to be done, and determined that, unless his losses through night air attacks became unacceptable, which was extremely unlikely, continuance on the 13th of strikes similar to those made on the 12th, gave the best prospects of accomplishing his objective.

(b) Operations on October 13th:

After midnight the enemy maintained air pressure on TF 38, but did not attack. However, all groups were constantly trailed until about 0430 as shown by the numerous contacts on the radar screens. Although the absence of enemy air attack may have been partially due to the employment of maneuver and to the employment of smoke screens, it was most probably due to the fact that the Japanese had expended their

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\* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT, October 12th, 1944; also Action Report CTG 38.4 Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas Philippine Islands in support of the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial C0263, November 16th, 1944, page 7.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Operation Order 21-44, Dispatch 031600, October 1944.

\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 050543, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.



maximum power in the many attacks made prior to midnight. As an indication of the Japanese method of harassing a task group, CTG 38.4 stated, "that between 1850 the preceding evening and 0400 October 13th, his task group had been subjected to a total of 47 raids, consisting of enemy snoopers search and attack planes. He further reported that about twenty of these raids had closed to gunfire range of the screen, always coming in singly and breaking off when fired upon. No enemy plane got inside the screen."\* Such operations kept the task force at general quarters throughout most of the night, and were effective in increasing the fatigue of all hands, but particularly of the gun crews, fire control, ship control, and the combat intelligence center parties.

TF 38 arrived on schedule in its mean dawn launching position about seventy miles bearing about 110°(T) from Seikoo Road, Formosa. As no dawn attack by the enemy developed, CTF 38 commenced launching his initial attack at about 0614 without enemy interference. Sunrise was at 0644.

The flying conditions were average with surface winds from the northeast of about twenty-eight knots. Cumulus clouds covering about 4/10 of the sky prevailed throughout the day, excepting during the afternoon from 1200 to 1300 when these clouds covered 8/10 of the sky. The visibility was about fifteen miles; the sea was moderate, with increasing swells from the northeast.\*\* Over the target weather conditions were generally good, although a weak to moderate cold front passed northwest to southeast over Formosa, and obscured the target for several hours during its passage. Very low ceiling and heavy squalls covered northern Formosa in the afternoon.

As in the previous day's attack, this attack was, in general, a dawn fighter sweep followed by air strikes. On this day there were but three air strikes (ABLE, BAKER and CHARLIE). However, there were, in addition, two small air searches interposed between the above strikes and two early afternoon fighter sweeps. The dawn fighter sweep was designed to gain command of the air over certain Formosa airfields. TG 38.1 was to gain command over Heito and Takao airfields; TG 38.2 over Shinchiku airfield and Kiirun Bay; TG 38.3 over the airfields of northern Formosa, and also over the Pescadores Islands; and TG 38.4 over Okayama

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\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas Philippine Islands in support, of the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944.

and Heito airfields.\* The succeeding air strikes and sweeps were designed to increase the destruction wrought on the preceding day on the ground installations of the more important airfields, notably Heito, Okayama, Einansho, Taito, Kagi, and Toko Seaplane Base, as well as others in the strike area. One important Formosa target was the power plants at Lake Jitsugetsutan. Also, the installations in the Pescadores Islands and the installations on Miyako Jima and Ishigaki Jima, where it was thought that air reinforcements from the Empire might be assembling. Actually, no build-up was observed on these fields.

In the above strikes TF 38 commenced launching planes on combat missions as follows:

<u>Time</u>					<u>Totals</u>
(a) 0514 Fighter Sweep:	134 VF	1 VF(P)			135
(b) 0731 Strike ABLE:	97 VF	5 VF(P)	104 VB	81 VT	287
(c) 0900 Strike BAKER:	83 VF	3 VF(P)	85 VB	51 VT	222
(d) 1100 Strike CHARLIE:	132 VF	6 VF(P)	84 VB	68 VT	290
(e) Miscellaneous Strikes and Searches:	20 VF	3 VF(P) 4 VF(N)	9 VB	4 VT(N)	<u>40</u>
(f) Total Sorties and Searches:	.....				974

The armament consisted generally of bombs and rockets, although on one strike four torpedo planes from the ESSEX were armed with torpedoes instead of bombs. These torpedoes were to be employed against the dam at Lake Jitsugetsutan, but unfortunately this lake could not be found by this strike, and the torpedoes were employed unsuccessfully against some lesser target.

Naturally, as on the strikes of the previous day, surprise was not achieved, although the opposition was less than expected. Although there had been some reinforcement of Japanese air overnight, the American planes pressed home their attacks, and once again achieved successful results. However, in view of the numerous airfields, most of which had not been known to CTF 38 previous to his strikes on October 12th, it was "found

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\* Action Reports WASP, HORNET, MONTEREY, INTREPID, BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, CABOT, ESSEX, LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, FRANKLIN, ENTERPRISE, INDEPENDENCE, BELLEAU WOOD: also Aircraft Action Reports Air Groups 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28, 29, 41, Attacks on Formosa, October 13th, 1944.



impossible to destroy all aircraft and neutralize all air installations."\* In the TG 38.3 area alone there were at least fifteen airfields instead of the four indicated in the intelligence material available prior to the operation.\*

Plane losses received by TF 38 from all causes were: six VF, five VB, one VT, or a total of twelve planes, some of which were jettisoned. The lifeguard submarine SAILFISH, off Southwest Formosa, recovered one pilot who had been shot down the previous day.\*\* Other pilots and air-crewmembers were recovered by TF 38. Personnel losses were a total of nine pilots and four aircrewmen being counted as lost or missing.\*\*\*

The two air searches were designed to discover whether any enemy shipping or presumably any enemy task forces were in the areas searched. The forenoon search, composed of six VF, one VF(P) and six VB planes from the WASP, was scheduled to search the Bashi Channel,\*\*\*\* but for reasons not explained, was diverted as an attack group to Batan Island where the installations on Basco Airfield were successfully attacked. This search and attack group departed at 0758 and returned at 1305.\*\*\*\*\* The afternoon search, composed of five VF, six VB, from the FRANKLIN, searched the sector 060°(T)-090°(T), to a distance of 275 miles, with negative results. One two-engine land bomber was shot down at 1640.\*\*\*\*\* This search departed at 1330 and returned at 1730.

Other than these two extremely limited searches, COMTHIRDFLT made no protective air searches whatsoever.

Throughout the day TF 38 maintained, in general, a combat air patrol (CAP) over each task group of eight VF to fourteen VF and a snooper anti-submarine patrol (SNASP) over each task group of from two VF - two VT planes to four VF - four VT planes. The CAP claimed having

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- \* Action Report CTG 38.3, Report of Battle of Formosa, Serial 0091, December 8th, 1944.
  - \*\* War Patrol Report SAILFISH, Report of TWELFTH War Patrol, Serial 057, December 11th, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Action Reports WASP, HORNET, MONTEREY, INTREPID, BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, CABOT, INDEPENDENCE, ESSEX, LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, FRANKLIN, ENTERPRISE, BELLEAU WOOD; also Aircraft Action Reports, Air Groups 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28, 29, Attacks on Formosa, October 13th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\* CTF 38 Operation Order 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 14, forwarded by WASP, Serial 0114, November 5th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 13, forwarded by FRANKLIN, Serial 077, November 6th, 1944.

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shot down near the force a total of twenty-one enemy planes of various types.\*

CTF 38 had scheduled four air strikes, but during the late forenoon he directed that no planes were to be launched after 1400.\*\* This forced the task group commanders to cancel the fourth strike (DOG). CTF 38 appears to have ordered the 1400 deadline because he realized (a) that his position was well known to the Japanese who had snooped him all day and (b) that Japanese air reaction against his task force was a very strong capability, and he did not wish to be caught recovering his planes at dusk.\*\* In this connection, it should be pointed out that the average time in the air of his various strikes was about four hours, although some flights were as long as five hours. Since sunset was at 1826 and since evening twilight ended at about 1940, there was a period between sunset and darkness of about seventy-four minutes wherein his task force would be particularly vulnerable to Japanese air attack. His estimate of the situation was correct, for as evening twilight was falling TG's 38.1 and 38.4 were attacked by Japanese torpedo planes. The hour chosen by the Japanese was excellent for "it was difficult to spot the attackers but not so difficult for them to spot surface targets."\*\*\* In the case of TG 38.1, the Japanese planes flew low and there was no radar warning before they were discovered visually by the WICHITA. The attack was made by eight land-attack planes attacking simultaneously. Although the task group succeeded in shooting down by AA fire six of these planes, one of them, at 1835, succeeded in torpedoing the CANBERRA, effectively disabling her by flooding both engine rooms and the after firerooms.\*\*\* This plane was shot down by AA fire. The attack on TG 38.4 on the other hand was conducted by torpedo planes of the land-attack and land-bomber type. Ten of these planes attacked, generally in pairs, over a forty minute period. Five planes were shot down by AA fire, and one by AA fire and an ENTERPRISE fighter, before they had accomplished any serious damage. They succeeded, however, in penetrating the screen and in launching torpedoes at the FRANKLIN and the SAN JACINTO.\*\*\*\* All torpedoes missed. However, one of these torpedo planes at 1831 in attempting to crash the

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\* Operational Summaries of Carrier Strikes, COMTHIRDFLT, Serial 0074, October 27th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 38.3, Report of Battle of Formosa, Serial 0091, December 8th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.1, Operations against Okinawa, Formosa, Northern Luzon, Leyte and the Japanese Fleet, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 00101, December 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas Philippine Islands in support of the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944, page 9.

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FRANKLIN slid across the flight deck doing superficial damage.\* In the above two attacks CTG 38.1 and CTG 38.4 believed that they had destroyed by AA fire thirteen enemy planes.\*\* Actually the Japanese reported losing twenty planes.\*\*\* Four of the seven (twenty-thirteen) additional Japanese planes lost were shot down by the ENTERPRISE CAP, the remaining three were lost apparently due to battle damage.

The torpedoing of the CANBERRA was reported to COMTHIRDFLT at 1842, and immediately presented a new, but certainly not unexpected situation to that commander. He immediately re-estimated the situation. It was clear that two principal courses of action presented themselves: (a) he could endeavor to save the CANBERRA, or (b) he would have to sink the CANBERRA,\*\*\*\* as she had no means of propulsion. The basic consideration was, of course, whether salvage operations would make it necessary to cancel or to reduce his scheduled air strikes against Luzon and the Visayas in support of COMSOWESPAC's scheduled operations so seriously as to make the net result unacceptable. He decided that he would endeavor to save the CANBERRA and at the same time carry out the scheduled air strikes.\*\*\*\*\* He reasoned as follows: (a) his basic plan called for the retirement of TF 38 during the night and the following day to the fueling area, where it was to be re-fueled on October 15th, then for carrier strikes by TG's 38.2, 38.3, and 38.4 against Luzon on October 16th and 17th, and by TG 38.1 against the Visayas on the same dates. Since he had refueled but two days before, there was sufficient fuel available within his task force to permit several more days of twenty-five knot combat operations; (b) should he have good fortune it would require about one day to tow the CANBERRA out of the more effective areas of Japanese aircraft operations, (at the time of torpedoing she was bearing 104°(T), distant ninety miles from Seikoo Road, Formosa, and in twenty-four hours at four and one-half knots she should have doubled that distance). During this time TF 38 would be required for counterbombing those enemy airfields from which aircraft might be employed against the CANBERRA. This included Formosa and northern Luzon airfields; (c) own submarines presented no problem, since the zone

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\* Action Report FRANKLIN, Operations Against the Enemy at Nansei Shotos, Formosa and the Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0039, October 31st, 1944, Part II, page 4.

\*\* Operational Summaries of Carrier Strikes COMTHIRDFLT, Serial 0074, October 27th, 1944.

\*\*\* Philippines Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5,

\*\*\*\* JS-104.

War Instructions, U.S. Navy, 1934, FTP 143, Para. 12174.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 131137, October 1944 to CINCPAC.



classifications for operations in CONVOY COLLEGE had been extended through October 16th;\* (d) there were sufficient escort aircraft carriers within TG 30.8 the fueling group, to provide adequate air cover over TG 30.3. He could divert these escort carriers to intercept TG 30.3 and act as air cover for that force.\*\* Once these escort carriers had joined - about October 16th - they would release the covering task groups of TF 38; (e) he could assign a new fueling rendezvous for CTG 30.8, the fueling group; and (f) if the situation improved on the following day he could divert to their fueling rendezvous those task groups not required to protect the CANBERRA.

In making this decision to save the CANBERRA, it should be clear that COMTHIRDFLT felt fully confident of his ability to carry out his remaining basic objectives - the destruction of aircraft and air installations on Luzon and in the Visayas - on the dates scheduled in his Operation Plan 21-44.\*\*\* In view of his apparent ability at this time to carry out his scheduled air strikes in support of COMSOWESPAC's planned operations, his decision to modify his basic plan, in order to salvage the CANBERRA, is considered sound.

At 1910 he designated a new fueling rendezvous to TG 30.8\*\*\*\* At 1919, in accordance with his protection of the CANBERRA objective, he directed CTF 38 to sweep Formosa on the morning of October 14th with three task groups, instead of retiring as planned, and on the same day to sweep the airfields at Aparri and Laoag on northern Luzon, in order to prevent concentration and heavy counterattack by Japanese air.\*\*\*\*\* CTF 38 designated TG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.3 for the Formosa attack and TG 38.4 for the Luzon attack.\*\*\*\*\*

COMTHIRDFLT at 2000 directed CTF 57 (Commander Forward Area) to form a task group to be known as TG 30.2, consisting of CRUDIV FIVE (CHESTER, SALT LAKE CITY, PENSACOLA), and six destroyers (CASE, CASSIN, CUMMINGS, DUNLAP, DOWNES and FANNING),\*\*\*\*\* and to dispatch it to escort the CANBERRA.\*\*\*\*\* This was effected at Saipan at 2200.\*\*\*\*\* He also directed the tug MUNSEE, which was standing by at sea, to relieve the WICHITA, which, at 2215, had taken the CANBERRA in tow and had headed on course 133°(T) towards Latitude 17°-00'N, Longitude 130°-00'E. Meanwhile,

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\* CINCPAC Dispatch 070316, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 131741, October 1944 to CTG 30.8.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 131137, October 1944 to CINCPAC.

\*\*\*\* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT October 13th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.1, Operations against Okinawa, Formosa, Northern Luzon, Leyte and the Japanese Fleet, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 00101, December 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 131100, October 1944, to CTF 57.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMCRUDIV 5, (CTG 30.2), October 13th, 1944.



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CTF 38 had directed COMCRUDIV THIRTEEN, with CRUDIV THIRTEEN (SANTA FE (F), MOBILE, BIRMINGHAM), plus DESDIV ONE HUNDRED (COGSWELL, CAPERTON, INGERSOLL, KNAPP), all from TG 38.3, to screen the WICHITA and CANBERRA\* which he commenced doing at 2100. Prior to this time this was being accomplished temporarily by the CONNOR and the BURNS alone. At 2152 the BELL relieved the CONNOR, which rejoined TG 38.1.

In accordance with the above instructions, CTF 38, with TG's 38.1, 38.2, and 38.3, remained in the operating area off Formosa to cover the retiring CANBERRA Group, while at 2201 TG 38.4 headed, on course 187°(T), speed nineteen,\*\* to its dawn launching position off northern Luzon.\*\*\* None of these task groups were attacked nor snooped during the remainder of the night. The reason for this was (a) that all Japanese planes available had been employed in the early evening attacks and (b) because the Japanese considered it unnecessary to trail TF 38 since the success of their evening attacks, resulting in damaged ships, indicated that TF 38 would still be in the Formosa area at dawn.\*\*\*\*

(c) Operations on October 14th:

TF 38, less TG 38.4, in accordance with instructions from COMTHIRDFLT, operated in an area about 120 miles to the eastward of Formosa, and remained in a covering position in the vicinity of the CANBERRA Group. It continued to operate throughout the remainder of the night without being shadowed or harassed by Japanese planes. At 0028 COMTHIRDFLT directed CTG 38.2 and CTG 38.3, upon completion of the forenoon strike, to proceed toward the rendezvous originally planned for the October 15th fueling.\*\*\*\*\* At the same time he directed CTG 38.1 to protect TG 30.3. At 0030 COMTHIRDFLT designated the CANBERRA Group as TG 30.3,\*\*\*\*\* and composed it as follows: COMCRUDIV THIRTEEN, CRUDIV THIRTEEN, CABOT, WICHITA, CANBERRA, DESDIV ONE HUNDRED, plus THE SULLIVANS and the STEPHEN POTTER.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT, October 15th, 1944.
  - \*\* Action Report FRANKLIN, Operations against the Enemy at Nansei Shotos, Formosa, and Philippine Islands, October 7th-31st, 1944, Serial 0039, October 31st, 1944, Enclosure (B), page 4.
  - \*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Visayas in support of the occupation of Leyte, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944, page 9.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 131923, October 1944, to SIXTH Base Air Force WDC Document 160258 NA 12592.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.1, Operations Against Okinawa, Formosa, northern Luzon, Leyte and the Japanese Fleet, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 00101, December 15th, 1944; also COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 131528, October 1944 to CTF 38.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report SANTA FE, period October 13th-17th, 1944, Serial 0382, October 29th, 1944.

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At 0304 he directed CTG 30.5 to provide air coverage with land-based air for TG 30.3 when practicable and to make a daily report of the position of that task group.\* Due to the distance of TG 30.3 from friendly air bases it would be several days before such air cover could be provided.

Sometime later, CINCPQA warned CTF 38 that a Japanese air attack on TF 38 was probable, and at 0643 CTF 38 so advised TF 38. CTG 38.1 then, at 0655, notified CTF 38 and COMTHIRDFLT that, after the departure of TG's 38.2 and 38.3, he would be unable to protect the CANBERRA during the expected evening twilight Japanese air attacks.\*\* This statement of CTG 38.1 had considerable merit, for is it not clear that if the entire task force was unable to prevent an effective attack on one of its highly maneuverable task groups, how could one task group alone be expected to prevent such an attack against a slow speed (four and one-half knot) formation, which had no freedom of maneuver whatsoever, and which was still within effective range of Japanese land-based aircraft?

Neither COMTHIRDFLT nor CTF 38 appear to have replied to CTF 38.1, or to have made any changes in their plans. In discussing this reaction, it must be accepted as a fact that both Commanders were fully cognizant of the situation which the departure of TG's 38.2 and 38.3 would make with relation to the defense of TG 30.3, and of the serious problem which would confront CTG 38.1 Why then did COMTHIRDFLT persist in his salvage operations? It seems clear (a) that he was determined at this time to carry out his basic objectives as directed in his Operation Plan 21-44, and (b) that, in view of the destruction to enemy facilities in the Nansei Shoto and in Formosa, and in further view of the evident enemy air weakness in northern Luzon, as discovered in his strikes on that area on October 11th, he assumed that these objectives could be carried out successfully with lesser forces than originally scheduled. Based on the analysis to date, this seems to have been a reasonable assumption.

It also seems clear that he fully realized that he might have additional ships torpedoed within TG's 38.1 and 30.3, and might even lose the CANBERRA. On the other hand, it is likely that he hoped that this would be more of a possibility than a probability, because of several factors, among which were (a) the additional destruction which he hoped would be accomplished on Formosa by his forenoon air strikes, and by the strike of the B-29's of the China based TWENTIETH Bomber Command also scheduled for that day,\*\*\* and (b) the defense which he hoped to obtain

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 131804, October 1944 to CTF'S 30.2, 30.3, 30.5.

\*\* Action Report CTG 38.1, Operations Against Okinawa, Formosa, Northern Luzon, Leyte and the Japanese Fleet, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 00101, December 15th, 1944; also COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 131528, October 1944 to CTF 38.

\*\*\* Director, Library Division, USAF History, Air University Letter November 8th, 1950, to President, Naval War College.



from the AA fire of both TG's 38.1 and 30.3, and from the planes of TG 38.1 and from the CABOT, which latter carrier he had already designated, at 0039, as part of TG 30.3.\*

Whatever may have been his reasons, it seems clear that at this time he felt that his decision was acceptable. That this decision was a courageous one is obvious, for TG 30.3 was within easy range of Japanese land-based planes of almost every type, and COMTHIRDFLT could expect that its position was known to the enemy at all times.

(1) Operations of TG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3 and 30.3 off Formosa:

At 0532 TG 30.3 changed course to 120°(T). At about 0600, CTF 38 commenced launching his planes from TG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.3 against Formosa without enemy interference. The targets selected were Okayama, Heito, Reigaryo, Shinchiku, Karenko, Taien, Matsuyama, and other lesser airfields and installations which presented suitable targets. Sunrise was at 0647.

The flying conditions in the vicinity of the task force were about average, with cloudy to overcast skies and broken high, medium, and low clouds. The ceiling at time of launching was 2500 feet, which increased to unlimited later in the day. The visibility was good, with intermittent light showers. The wind was northeasterly, about twenty-five knots, decreasing as the day passed. The sea was rough with moderate swells.\*\*

This attack differed from the attacks of previous days, in that it consisted of but one strike. This strike was designed to increase the destruction already accomplished on the airfields and installations of Formosa, and to destroy any Japanese aircraft encountered, in order to reduce the possibility of effective air attacks being delivered against TG 30.3. The strike was made by 146 VF and 100 VB.

The armament consisted of bombs and rockets. Very little opposition was encountered. The weather over the target was generally satisfactory, but the visibility over the ground was bad in a number of important areas, because the Japanese employed brush fires and smoke pots to obscure the targets.\*\*\*

Plane losses received by TG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.3 from all causes were: sixteen VF, one VF(N), five VB, and one VT, or a total of twenty-three planes, of which nine were jettisoned. Eleven pilots and one

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\* War Diary STEPHEN POTTER, October 14th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CABOT, Air Cover for TG 30.3 from October 14th-18th, 1944, Serial 063, October 18th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.1, Operations against Okinawa, Formosa, Northern Luzon, Leyte and the Japanese Fleet, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 00101, December 15th, 1944.



aircrewman were counted as lost or missing. No pilots or aircrewmen were recovered by submarines on this day.

Throughout the day TF 38 maintained, in general, a combat air patrol (CAP) over each task group of from twelve VF in TG 38.2 to twenty in TG's 38.1 and 38.3. It also maintained a snoopers anti-submarine patrol (SNASP) over each task group ranging from eight VF in TG 38.1 to four VF - four VT in TG 38.3, and to eight VF - eight VB/VT in TG 38.2.

This CAP and SNASP were necessary, for the various task groups were being constantly trailed by Japanese planes throughout most of the day. These snooping activities were rather limited in intensity during the forenoon, but increased in intensity during the afternoon.\* The CAP claimed having shot down near the force a total of seventy-six planes of various types.\*\*

During the day, as during the previous day, COMTHIRDFLT made no protective air searches whatsoever, presumably relying on intelligence from CINCPQA and from the Allied submarines to alert him in case of danger.

At 1100, in accordance with orders previously issued by COMTHIRDFLT, the CABOT, THE SULLIVANS, and the STEPHEN POTTER were detached from TG 38.2 and ordered to join TG 30.3,\*\*\* which was accomplished at 1544.\*\*\*\* The HOUSTON was also detached from TG 38.2 and directed to join TG 38.1,\*\*\*\*\* which she accomplished at 1620. With the reporting of THE SULLIVANS and the STEPHEN POTTER to CTG 30.3, the BELL and BURNS were detached from that group and directed to return to TG 38.1. The CABOT, meanwhile, at 1420, had launched patrols to relieve the TG 38.1 CAP over TG 30.3. These CABOT patrols consisted of eight VF for CAP and four VF - four VT as SNASP.\*\*\*\*

At 1135 TG's 38.2 and 38.3 departed the Formosa area for the fueling rendezvous with TG 30.8, course 135°(T), speed twenty-four knots.\*\*\*\*\* The defense of TG 30.3, in addition to that provided by TG 30.3 itself, now fell entirely on CTG 38.1, who stationed his task group in an area about forty miles to the northeast of TG 30.3. Why he chose such an area is not understood, for does it not seem more logical that he should have taken station in the direction of the principal enemy air bases, and therefore to the northwest of TG 30.3, in order to cover adequately that group

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\* War Diaries, Various ships involved, October 14th, 1944.

\*\* Operational Summaries of Carrier Strikes, COMTHIRDFLT, Serial C074, October 27th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary STEPHEN POTTER, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CABOT, Air Cover for TG 30.3 from October 14th-18th, 1944, Serial 063, October 18th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report HOUSTON, Report of Actions Occurring October 12th, 13th, and 14th, 1944, Serial 0134, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary LANGLEY, October 14th, 1944.



from both Formosa and the Nansei Shoto? Also, should he not have been much nearer TG 30.3?

Commencing at about 1508 and continuing until about 2330, all task groups in the Formosa area, including TG's 38.2 and 38.3, were subjected to continuing air attacks from Japanese planes which, despite the numerous attacks on Formosa, were in considerable strength. All CAP's and SNASP's were thoroughly occupied in driving off these attacks during daylight hours, and were, in general, highly successful in accomplishing this objective. COMTHIRDFLT believed that TF 38 had destroyed by AA gunfire a total of twenty-one planes.\*

All task groups, with the single exception of TG 38.1, succeeded in driving away enemy planes which closed the various task groups, although the HANCOCK in TG 38.2 received slight damage at 1523 from a 250 kilogram bomb. TG 38.1 was heavily attacked at 1835 (sunset was at 1822) by numerous two-engine land bombers carrying torpedoes. Although the task group succeeded in shooting down ten enemy planes, the light cruiser HOUSTON was, at 1841, torpedoed amidships,\*\* which resulted in the flooding of both firerooms and the forward engine room. At 1912 she reported that all power was lost and that she had a seven degree list to port.\*\*\* In view of the many conflicting reports which he received from her repair parties, which indicated that she could not be saved, the Commanding Officer advised CTG 38.1 at 1933 that, as she was breaking up, he planned to abandon her. CTG 38.1 concurred in this view, stating, "If you are breaking up, abandon ship."\*\*\*\*

The personnel of the HOUSTON, at 1940\*\*\*\*\* commenced abandoning ship by life raft floater net, and by simply jumping overboard.\*\*\*\*\* The Commanding Officer, at 2007, did not consider that she could be towed and so reported to CTG 38.1.\*\*\* CTG 38.1 then ordered COMDESDIV NINETY-TWO in the BOYD with the GRAYSON and COWELL to expedite getting personnel off the HOUSTON, and to sink her with torpedoes when personnel were clear.\*\*\*\* The position of the HOUSTON at this time was bearing 104°(T), distant 150 miles from Seikoo Bay, Formosa; 207°(T), distant 145 miles from Miyako Jima; and 027°(T), distant 288 miles from Aparri, Luzon.

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\* Operational Summaries of Carrier Strikes COMTHIRDFLT, Serial 0074, October 27th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report HOUSTON, Report of Actions Occurring 12th, 13th, and 14th, October 1944, Serial 0134, October 20th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.1, Operations Against Okinawa, Formosa, Northern Luzon, Leyte and the Japanese Fleet, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 00101, December 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary COWELL, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary BOYD, October 14th, 1944.



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Then, at 2019, the Commanding Officer, HOUSTON, signalled that he desired a tow.\* At 2030 the Commanding Officer, HOUSTON, decided she could be saved and ordered the abandonment discontinued.\*\* At 2054, CTG 38.1 directed COMCRUDIV TEN in the BOSTON to tow the HOUSTON out of the area.\* Thirty-three officers and 743 men who were later picked up by the three destroyers, had abandoned ship by this time.\*\*

COMTHIRDFLT now re-estimated the situation. He was confronted with a situation somewhat similar to that which he had faced on the previous evening when the CANBERRA was torpedoed. However, tonight's situation was the more serious, in that he now had two damaged cruisers instead of one, and therefore he had to decide (a) whether "to sink the two crippled cruisers and withdraw the fleet," or (b) whether "to endeavor to tow the cripples to safety."\*\*\*

Once again the basic consideration should have been, of course, whether salvage operations would make it necessary to cancel or to reduce so seriously his scheduled air strikes against Luzon and the Visayas, in support of COMSCOWESPAC's scheduled operations, as to make the net result unacceptable.

In this case COMTHIRDFLT decided to save both cruisers.\*\*\* He stated that he planned to accomplish this by assuming the offensive and attacking the Japanese airfields in Luzon, because these airfields were the probable source of the most effective Japanese air attacks, since Formosa and Okinawa would soon be out of effective range.\*\*\* He makes no reference in any of the material available to this study of the necessity for carrying out his basic objectives as directed in his Operation Plan 21-44 and of the necessity for striking Luzon and the Visayas in furtherance of those basic objectives.

It would appear from the above reasoning that COMTHIRDFLT had temporarily modified his basic plan; had therefore cancelled temporarily further air operations in support of these objectives and had adopted instead a protective objective for CTG 38.1 - notably the salvaging of the CANBERRA and HOUSTON. This is not believed to have been the case. Rather, it would appear from the dispatches which he issued early the following morning, that he had determined to carry out his basic objectives and would therefore strike Luzon and the Visayas with heavy air strikes as soon as fueled, and that he felt that he could easily accomplish these basic objectives as well as salvage the CANBERRA and

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\* Action Report COMCRUDIV TEN, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 0022, October 29th, 1944, page 8.

\*\* War Diary HOUSTON, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary, COMTHIRDFLT, October 14th, 1944.

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HOUSTON because the air strikes which would protect the damaged cruisers would also accomplish the basic objectives. He appears to have reasoned about as follows: (a) Owing to his commitments with regard to the CANBERRA and HOUSTON Groups, he would not be able to carry out the full air strikes planned against Luzon and the Visayas for October 16th. He had planned, on that date, to strike Luzon with TG's 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4, and the Visayas (Leyte, Cebu, Negros) with TG 38.1.\* From a chart analysis he could see that he would still be able to strike the Visayas on October 16th as planned with one task group (TG 38.2), but would not be able to strike Luzon as planned with three task groups. Instead, but one task group (TG 38.3), would be available for these latter strikes. However, he realized that TG 38.4, which was enroute to its fueling rendezvous, could be made available for an additional strike on Luzon on the following day, October 15th. He reasoned that these strikes, plus the effective non-scheduled air strikes he had just completed against Formosa with TG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.3, and against Aparri with TG 38.4, were the equivalent of the planned strikes, and therefore by executing them he would be effectively carrying out his air operations in support of his basic objectives. (b) He realized that TF 38 was somewhat low on fuel, but he was compensating for this at the present time by dispatching TG's 38.2 and 38.3 to fuel on the following morning, October 15th. He realized further that prior to the air operations in the Philippine area he would have to fuel TG's 38.1 and 38.4 also. From a chart analysis he was satisfied that this could be effectively completed by about noon on October 16th, at which time he would have available all four carrier task groups, not only fully fueled, but with their aircraft and pilot losses generally replaced by replacements from his fueling group, TG 30.8. (c) Finally, he estimated that his HOUSTON Group and his CANBERRA Group would merge on the following day at about 1200 at which time they would be roughly 180 miles from Seikoo Bay, Formosa. He seems to have felt that, although this position was within range of Japanese land-based aircraft from Formosa, northern Luzon and Sakashima Gunto, these ranges were steadily increasing and therefore, unless the Japanese struck by air sometime on the 16th, the HOUSTON and CANBERRA Groups would be effectively clear of air attack from Japanese land bases by early morning on the 17th. Meanwhile, he planned to continue to employ TG 38.1 as cover for the HOUSTON and CANBERRA until early afternoon, October 16th, when he planned to detach it to its fueling rendezvous.

It seems clear that COMTHIRDFLT was able to carry out effectively either the scheduled air strikes, or their equivalent, against Luzon and the Visayas in sufficient time to support adequately COMSOWESPAC's planned operations. His decision therefore, to modify his basic plan to the extent of salvaging the CANBERRA and the HOUSTON is considered sound.

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\* CTF 38 Operation Order 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944.



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At 2102, COMTHIRDFLT directed CTG 38.1 to remain in vicinity HOUSTON and BOSTON.\*

At 2135 he directed the fleet tug PAWNEE to rendezvous with the HOUSTON Group at dawn October 16th, to then relieve the BOSTON which was to rejoin TG 38.1.\*\*

At 2320, the BOSTON arrived, took the HOUSTON in tow and commenced withdrawal from the combat area.\*\*\* She endeavored to steer course 150° (T), but owing to difficulties with the HOUSTON was not able to steer this course steadily. She made good an average speed of about two and one-half knots.\*\*\*\* The position of the HOUSTON at this time was bearing 107°(T), distant 150 miles from Seikoo Bay, Formosa.

The HOUSTON Group now consisted of the damaged HOUSTON in tow of the BOSTON, and screened by the COWELL and BOYD. The GRAYSON remained behind to continue the search for survivors. Meanwhile, COMTHIRDFLT assigned the SAN DIEGO, OAKLAND, MARSHALL and MILLER from TG 38.2 to TG 38.1, as replacements for the above salvage ships.\*\*\*\*\*

(2) Operations of TG 38.4 on October 14th

At 0600, when in launching position about 120 miles northeast of Aparri, CTG 38.4 launched a fighter sweep against the airfields at Aparri and at Laoag. The Aparri strike and the Laoag strike each consisted of twenty-three VF, one VF(P) - a total of forty-six VF, two VF(P).\*\*\*\*\* The armament consisted, in some cases, of rockets. Sunrise was at 0647.

The flying conditions were average to poor. The wind was from the northeast, twenty-six knots at time of launching planes, and diminished to about twenty knots at sundown. The ceiling, which was unlimited at dawn, fell to about 1000 feet during the day, and rose to 8000 feet at sundown. The sky coverage varied from 3/10 to overcast, the latter occurring during the forenoon and early afternoon. The average visibility

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141202, October 1944, to CTG 38.1.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141235, October 1944, to PAWNEE.

\*\*\* Action Report COMCRUDIV 10, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 0022, October 29th, 1944, page 8.

\*\*\*\* War Diary HOUSTON, October 14th-15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.1, Operations Against Okinawa, Formosa, Northern Luzon, Leyte and the Japanese Fleet, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 00101, December 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Reports, FRANKLIN, SAN JACINTO, ENTERPRISE, BELLEAU WOOD, Action October 7th-24th, 1944.

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was about eight miles. The sea was moderate with a moderate swell.\* There were frequent rain squalls over Aparri; and Laoag was so closed in by bad weather that the planes of the SAN JACINTO and ENTERPRISE were unable to reach their targets.\*\*

(a) The strike on Aparri was quite successful. It met no opposition, and, according to CTG 38.4, succeeded in destroying five enemy planes on the ground.\*\*\*

During the day CTG 38.4 maintained a combat air patrol (CAP) of about fourteen VF planes, and a snoopier anti-submarine patrol (SNASP) of about four VF - four VT planes.\*\*\*\*

There were five or six one-plane bogies on the radar screens of the task force at various times throughout the day. One of these, a two-engine land-bomber was shot down at 0832 by the CAP.\*\*\* It is not clear whether or not the Japanese had discovered the location of TG 38.4.

During this date one VF was lost operationally and five VF were jettisoned.

At 1800, CTG 38.4 decided to retire to the fueling rendezvous set for the following morning with the fueling group. He therefore changed course to 140°(T), and speed to eighteen knots.

(3) Summary of Results (Battle off Formosa), October 12th, 13th, and 14th, 1944.\*\*\*\*\*

CTF 38 believed, from his pilot claims supported in part by photographic coverage, that TF 38 had destroyed:

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- \* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944.
  - \*\* War Diary ENTERPRISE, October 14th, 1944; also Action Report SAN JACINTO, Operations against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, P.I., and Visayas, P.I., in support of the occupation of Leyte, P.I., October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0043, October 31st, 1944.
  - \*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas Philippine Islands in support of the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944, page 10.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Reports, FRANKLIN, SAN JACINTO, ENTERPRISE, BELLEAU WOOD, October 7th-24th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTF 38, Summary of TF 38 Operations, August 29th-October 30th, 1944, Serial 00505, November 3rd, 1944; also Operational Summaries of Carrier Strikes, COMTHIRDFLT, Serial 0074, October 27th, 1944.

(a) Enemy aircraft on the ground or on the water - 278 planes.

(b) Enemy aircraft in the air - 377 planes.

These latter comprised 216 shot down over Formosa, 112 shot down near TF 38, forty-six shot down by ship's gun-fire, and three shot down by TF 38 aircraft on search.

The above claims add up to a total of 655 Japanese aircraft destroyed. These claims are substantiated to a considerable degree by the records of the SIXTH Base Air Force and post-war interrogations of personnel of the SIXTH Base Air Force. These two sources indicated that admitted Japanese aircraft losses amounted to about 492 aircraft\* including 100 Army aircraft of all types\*\* which Commander SIXTH Base Air Force estimated had been destroyed in these operations. The difference of 163 planes between Allied claims and the Japanese losses is due in part to the lack of completely reliable information from Japanese sources and in part to overoptimistic claims by Allied pilots.

(c) Enemy shipping.\*\*\*

(1) Sunk:

Four large cargo ships, four medium cargo ships, ten small cargo ships, one medium transport, six submarine chasers, and fifteen sampans, luggers and barges.

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\* Obtained by subtracting total losses of SIXTH Base Air Force aircraft for October 10th, 11th, 15th and 16th from total losses for period October 10th - 0719, 17th (584 planes); viz., thirty-one at Okinawa October 10th, forty-four off Formosa October 15th and 16th, and seventeen search aircraft lost during this period.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation Nav No. 115, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN, page 501.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.4 Operations Against Okinawa, Formosa, Luzon, Visayas, etc., October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944, page 10.



## (2) Probably sunk:\*

One mine sweeper, two small escort ships, three medium cargo ships, three small cargo ships, five submarine chasers, and seven sampans, luggers and barges.

## (3) Damaged:

One destroyer, one motor torpedo boat, two large cargo ships, eight medium cargo ships, twenty-two small cargo ships, one large oiler, one large transport, five submarine chasers, twelve SD, and thirty-nine sampans, luggers and barges.

(d) Considerable destruction was wrought at Eiko; Einansho (eleven hangers destroyed or damaged); Garan Bi; Heito; Jitsugetsutan; Kago (eight hangers and three large shops destroyed or damaged); Karenko (one large barracks, one ammunition dump exploded, one large aluminum plant and one large nickel plant damaged); Kato (fuel dump destroyed); Kiirun (one industrial plant, power plant, warehouses, and shipping installations damaged); Kobi (four hangers destroyed or damaged); Koryu, Kizan; Matsuyama (nine buildings and shops damaged); Okayama (four hangers, six shops destroyed or damaged); Pescadores; Shinchiku (four hangars, eight large shops, two large barracks destroyed; two buildings of fuel plant, possible oxygen plant, transformer station, roundhouse and railway yards damaged); Taichu (three hangars, two barracks, twelve buildings destroyed or damaged); Taien; Taihoku; Tako - Reigaryo (one ammunition dump exploded, three warehouses destroyed); Tansui (two large warehouses and a number of freight cars destroyed); Toko (hangar damaged); Toshien; Toyohara (three hangars destroyed).\*

(e) In respect to losses and damage to enemy shipping, base facilities, etc. by Task Force 38, Japanese records provide but meager information. However, the shipping claims appear to be excessive since the Allied analysis made in 1947 gave as sunk fifteen merchant ships totalling 39,715 tons and one converted cruiser,\*\* while the Japanese analysis made in 1952 gave as sunk seven merchant ships totalling 14,360 tons and two patrol craft, and as damaged two merchant ships totalling 6,283 tons, one small mine layer, and two patrol craft.\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CTF 38, Summary of TF 38 Operations, August 29th-October 30th, 1944, Serial 00505, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During World War II, The Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.

\*\*\* The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, February 1952.

(4) Summary of Air Strikes on Aparri, northern Luzon, October 14th, 1944:

CTG 38.4 believed from his pilots claims supported in part by photographic coverage that TG 38.4 had destroyed:

(a) Enemy aircraft on the ground or on the water - five planes.

(b) Enemy aircraft in the air - one plane.\*

(4) Operations on October 15th:

(a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT:

As a result of his estimate of the situation made the preceding evening, COMTHIRDFLT, in the NEW JERSEY with TG 38.2, which task group was retiring to a fueling rendezvous for the following morning, sent dispatches as follows:

(1) At 0040 to CTG 38.4 wherein he directed that commander to proceed to a striking position off the east coast of Luzon and launch maximum strikes on central Luzon during daylight, October 15th, with the destruction of aircraft and air installations as primary mission.\*\*

(2) At 0110 to CTG 30.3 wherein he advised that commander of the torpedoing of the HOUSTON, and of her midnight position, October 14th, as well as her course and speed. He directed CTG 30.3 to alter course to bring CANBERRA and HOUSTON Groups together as soon as practicable without losing too much distance made good.\*\*\*

(3) At 0134 to CTG 38.1 wherein he directed that commander to supply one additional CVL and four additional destroyers to TG 30.3. He further directed him to proceed at about 1400, October 15th, with the remainder of TG 38.1 towards his fueling rendezvous, Latitude 16°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E to arrive at 0700 the following morning, where he would be joined by TG 38.4. Then after fueling, both groups were to join TG 38.3 vicinity Latitude 15°-30'N, Longitude 123°-00'E at 0600, October 17th, and were to conduct sustained strikes on Luzon.\*\*\*\*

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\* Action Report, CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas Philippine Islands in support of the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944, page 10.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141540, October 1944 to CTG 38.4.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141610, October 1944 to CTG 30.3.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141634, October 1944 to CTG 38.1.



(4) At 0140 to CTG 38.4 wherein he directed that commander upon completion of strikes against Luzon to proceed to rendezvous with TG 38.1 and fueling group at Latitude 16°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E to arrive 0700 October 16th. After fueling in company with TG 38.1, he was to proceed to Latitude 15°-30'N, Longitude 123°-00'E, to arrive 0600, October 17th where he was to join TG 38.3 and all three groups were to conduct sustained strikes on Luzon.\*

(5) At 0230 to CTG 30.8 (Fueling Group) wherein he directed that commander as to the disposition desired of certain of his units in order that the fueling and replenishment schedules designated in the dispatches here listed might be maintained.\*\*

(6) At 0230 to CTF 38 wherein he directed that commander that upon completion of fueling, (a) TG 38.2 was to proceed to vicinity Samar and strike Visayas early October 16th, and continue through the 17th, and (b) TG 38.3 was to strike Luzon on October 16th, and, in company with TG's 38.1 and 38.4 on the 17th. He further directed that at dusk October 17th, TG's 38.2 and 38.3 were to proceed to fueling rendezvous Latitude 15°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E to arrive 0700 October 18th; that TG's 38.1 and 38.4 were to strike Visayas on October 18th and that CTF 38 was to conform to the schedule in accordance with COMTHIRDFLT's Operation Plan 21-44.\*\*\*

COMTHIRDFLT must have been satisfied up to this time with the performance of his command. All of his operations had been carried out satisfactorily and heavy damage had been inflicted on the enemy, without any commensurate damage being inflicted on his forces by the enemy. The only damage to his ships was the crippling of the CANBERRA and the HOUSTON by torpedo attack, and he was almost sure that he would succeed in saving these two cruisers. His command was now preparing to carry out the additional operations directed in his Operation Plan 21-44 and in CTF 38's Operation Plan 11-44. His operations were proceeding according to plan.

However, if such were his thoughts they were suddenly changed, for at about 0730 he received CINCPQA's Dispatch\*\*\*\* wherein CINCPQA stated that he had received word that the Japanese believed TF 38 to be retreating because of their air attacks, and had therefore ordered the SECOND Striking Force and the Shore Based Air Forces to carry out annihilation operations as directed. CINCPQA advised that in his opinion the SECOND Striking Force consisted of carriers and surface vessels in the Empire Area. Actually, the SECOND Striking Force consisted of but two CA, one CL, and seven destroyers.

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141640, October 1944 to CTG 38.4

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141730, October 1944 to CTG 30.8

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141738, October 1944 to CTF 38.

\*\*\*\* CINCPQA Dispatch 142219, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.



COMTHIRDFLT now began re-estimating the situation anew, but he appears to have taken no action other than to have observed the developing situation which was far from clear at this time. What was the Japanese plan?

About this time, to quote COMTHIRDFLT, "there was a tremendous campaign of falsehood claiming the destruction of virtually all of the THIRD Fleet."\*

COMTHIRDFLT now decided that the opportunity had arisen to comply with CINCPAC's basic instructions, "that in case opportunity for destruction of major portion of the enemy fleet offer or can be created, such destruction becomes the primary task of the Western Pacific Task Forces."\*\* He was anxious to have a fleet action; he had powerful forces scarcely damaged, and much superior to any Japanese forces which might be brought against him. How best, therefore, could he bring about the desired fleet action? He decided on deception. He decided that he would endeavor to create in Japanese minds the illusion that his forces had, in fact, been largely destroyed and that except for TG 38.1, which was protecting TG 30.3, and for TG 38.4, which was attacking Luzon, all of his forces had been destroyed.\*

He therefore, at 1049, commenced preparations. He notified CINCPAC and COMSOPAC that he was disposing his forces for fleet action, and that except for the Luzon strike then underway, no fast carriers would be available to support KING II until further notice. In this dispatch he also directed CTG 38.4 to report the Luzon enemy air situation as soon as practicable direct to COMSOPACFOR.\*\*\*

In addition to this, at about 1100, he received a dispatch from CINCPAC\*\*\*\* to COMFAIRWING ONE at Ulithi, advising that commander that there was a suspicion that a Japanese surface force had departed the Empire area in order to destroy the CANBERRA and HOUSTON, and directing that commander to extend his air search to the maximum in order to cover the assumed enemy approach from Bungo Suido to about Latitude 20°-00'N, Longitude 126°-00'E. This dispatch evidently reinforced COMTHIRDFLT's opinion that he could bring about a fleet action.

In accordance with this opinion, he advised all commanders concerned at 1152 that he had information that the enemy believed TF 38

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\* Action Report, COMTHIRDFLT, Report on the Operations of the Western Pacific Task Forces and the THIRD Fleet, Serial 0085, January 25th, 1944.

\*\* CINCPAC Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150149, October 1944 to CINCPAC and COMSOPAC.

\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 150136, October 1944 to COMFAIRWING 1.



beaten, reduced in strength, and therefore retiring. He announced his decision, "I intend to attack in strength," and gave, in substance, as his general plan that TG 30.3 would represent the beaten remnant of the THIRD Fleet, and that other forces would be concentrated, as soon as fueled, towards reference position Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E.\*

COMTHIRDFLT at some time during the late forenoon, directed that previous orders to CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 to strike the Visayas and Luzon be cancelled. Instead, these two groups were to proceed during the night to position Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E, to arrive at 0600. From this position they were to launch air searches in an endeavor to locate the units of the Japanese Fleet reported east of the Nansei Shoto.\*\*

It will be observed that this position was between 350 and 400 miles from Luzon and Formosa, about 260 miles from Okinawa, and about 225 miles from Miyako Jima. Thus, as his rendezvous point was beyond the range of most planes operating out of Luzon and Formosa, he seems to have estimated that his task groups would have no difficulty shooting down any snoopers from these areas. However, his reason for designating a rendezvous point so near Okinawa and the Sakishima Gunto is not understood, since his danger of discovery from these areas was great. Although these fields had been heavily hit by his carrier planes on preceding days, experience had shown that such damage was readily repaired, and in view of the nearness to the Empire, replacement planes could be quickly flown in.

COMTHIRDFLT now commenced implementing his decision. At 1156 he directed CTG 30.3 to transmit urgent dummy messages frequently to create an appearance of desperation.\*\*\* At 1200 he modified previous instructions issued to CTG 38.1, CTG 30.2 (CRUDIV FIVE and escorts) and to the fueling group. He directed CTG's 38.1 and 30.2 to a new fueling rendezvous for 0600, October 16th, and ordered them to fuel immediately from TU 30.8.2, and for CTG 38.1 to obtain replenishment aircraft from the CVE with that fueling group. Then, upon completion of these fueling and replenishment operations, CTG 30.2 was to report to CTG 38.1 for duty. The thus augmented TG 38.1 was to join TG's 38.2 and 38.3 at a rendezvous to be designated.\*\*\*\*

At 1214 he directed CTG 38.4, upon completion of fueling on October 16th, to rendezvous with CTF 38 at 0600, October 17th, in Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E.

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150252 October 1944 to, among others, CINCPAC, COMSOWESPAC, and all TFC's THIRD Fleet.

\*\* War Diaries, among others, CTG's 38.2, 38.3, HANCOCK and LEXINGTON.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150256, October 1944.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150300, October 1944 to CTG's 38.1, 30.2, and CTU 30.8.2.



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At 1219, in a dispatch wherein he gave instructions to CTG 30.3, he directed CTG 30.5 to provide air cover and to report daily the position of TG 30.3 when practicable.\*

At about 1300 he received CINCPQA's dispatch\*\* to COMSOWESPAC, wherein CINCPQA mindful of the fact that no submarines were on station at the entrances to San Bernardino Strait and Surigao Strait (they had been removed on October 12th), requested that commander to make the maximum air reconnaissance possible to cover the Pacific Ocean exits from San Bernardino and Surigao Straits, commencing daylight October 16th, and continuing until the situation clarified. This was highly illuminating to him, for, until he had received this dispatch, he most likely expected that the contemplated fleet action was to be with Japanese Empire forces only. Now it was clear that his immediate superior in command, CINCPQA, envisaged other enemy forces, probably those in the Lingga-Singapore area, as possibly entering the action, and endeavoring, in conjunction with the Empire Forces, to make a gigantic double envelopment of TF 38.

At 1320 he gave CTG 30.8 (fueling group) directions concerning the activities of that group during the forthcoming operations.\*\*\*

At 1358 he advised CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 that CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 were to arrive at reference position, Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E at 0600, October 16th.\*\*\*\*

At about 1500 he received COMSEVENTHFLT's dispatch\*\*\*\*\* wherein that officer: (a) stated that the Central Philippines Attack Force would proceed with the KING II Operations; (b) requested assistance from TF 38 when practicable; and (c) directed CTG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group) to strike the western Visayas on October 17th, 18th, and 19th with the destruction of enemy aircraft and combatant ships as the primary objective.

This was highly reassuring. It showed him that COMSOWESPAC considered that the preliminary operations already completed in support of KING II had been effectively accomplished, and further indicated that commander's confidence in the ability of the THIRD Fleet, plus the TF 17 submarines to cover adequately his operations in the Philippines.

At 1551 he received CINCPQA's dispatch to the Deputy Commander, TWENTIETH Air Force, requesting maximum action against enemy air forces

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150319, October 1944 to CTG 30.3.

\*\* CINCPQA Dispatch 150341, October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150420, October 1944 to CTG 30.8.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150438, October 1944 to CTG's 38.1 and 38.4.

\*\*\*\*\* COMSEVENTHFLT Dispatch 150542, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

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in Formosa until the situation cleared up.\* This message plainly indicated to him the close attention with which CINCPQA was following the developing situation.

From this time until 1930, he received routine traffic as well as continuous Japanese broadcasts concerning their plans to destroy his retiring forces. However, at about 1930 he received an important contact report\*\* from the BESUGO which reported: (a) three heavy cruisers and one light cruiser at 0800 that morning departing Bungo Suido on estimated course 140°(T), estimated speed eighteen knots; and (b) one destroyer and one large ship at 1115 that morning departing Bungo Suido on estimated course 135°(T), estimated speed twenty knots.

At about 2000 he received CINCPQA's dispatch\*\*\* informing him of the new submarine dispositions which CINCPQA was in the process of making. These dispositions were designed, in part, to provide reconnaissance for the THIRD Fleet against enemy forces which might be closing it. They showed that Luzon Strait was in the process of being blocked; that own submarines in TF 38's probable operating area were retiring from the area, presumably so as not to embarrass TF 38; that the pass between the northeast tip of Formosa and the westernmost island of the Sakashima Gunto was in the process of being blocked; that one submarine was off the northwest tip of Formosa; that two submarines were watching Okinawa, that one submarine was in each of the Areas ABANDON, ABLAZE, ABUSE and ABDUCT of the MARU MORGUE; that three submarines were off the southern approaches to Nagasaki-Sasebo; that three submarines were guarding Bungo Suido and that two submarines were guarding the southwest approaches to Tokyo Bay.

As a consequence of this dispatch, COMTHIRDFLT decided that there were certain sectors which required air coverage additional to submarine reconnaissance. One of these sectors was that embracing Luzon Strait, Formosa and the pass to the northeast of Formosa. This was because the CINCPQA submarines, which were designed to block these sectors, were proceeding to their new positions and might possibly not have completed their blocks in sufficient time to prevent Japanese surface forces passing through their sectors unobserved. Another sector was that between Okinawa and, Miyako Retto where certain of the channels were deep, and where there was no submarine reconnaissance; a third sector was to the northeast where surface forces which had succeeded in passing through Bungo Suido without detection might well attack TF 38 either as a single envelopment or as a double envelopment, employing other surface forces, notably the heavy ships, in the Lingga-Singapore area. In this connection it is necessary here to point out that COMTHIRDFLT did not consider that the submarines off Bungo

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\* CINCPQA Dispatch 150651, October 1944 to Deputy Commander, 20th Air Force.

\*\* CTG 17.17 (BESUGO) Dispatch 151014, October 1944 to CTF 17 (COMSUBPAC).

\*\*\* CINCPQA Dispatch 150932, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.



Suido were adequate in number to insure proper reconnaissance.\*

At about 2200 he intercepted a dispatch from CINCPQA to COMNAVGROUP CHINA requesting reconnaissance of South China Sea north of Kamranh Bay - Lingayen Line by China-based air for the purpose of detecting the possible movement of enemy fleet units towards area in which THIRD Fleet was operating, and requesting information as to what extent this could be accomplished.\*\* As this was in accordance with a request which he had made on CINCPQA at 1749,\*\*\* it must have been gratifying to him to observe that his operations continued to meet with the approval of his immediate superior in command.

He received no further information during the night which caused him to make any change in his plans for fleet action.

(b) Operations of CTG 30.3 on October 15th.

During the remainder of the night, both the CANBERRA Group and the HOUSTON Group continued their retirements from the area.

(1) Operations of HOUSTON Group.

At about 0230, the BOSTON finally succeeded in steadying on the base course of  $150^{\circ}$ (T), speed 4.5 knots. The HOUSTON rode easily and the group headed towards the rendezvous with CTG 30.3.

(2) Operations of CANBERRA Group.

At about 0100, the group was reconnoitered by a low-flying enemy plane. At this same time the tug MUNSEE was contacted by radar, and by 0200 it was in position to take the tow from the WICHITA. However, CTG 30.3 decided to wait until dawn to accomplish the transfer, which was finally accomplished between 0645 and 0715.\*\*\*\*

Weather conditions throughout the day were about as follows: high overcast with an unlimited ceiling and with scattered low clouds at 2500

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 272215, September 1944 to CINCPQA.

\*\* CINCPQA Dispatch 151230, October 1944 to COMNAVGROUPCHINA.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150849, October 1944 to CINCPQA.

\*\*\*\* Action Report COMCRUDIV 13 (CTG 30.3) - Report THIRD Fleet Salvage Group, October 13th-17th, 1944, Serial 0086, October 28th, 1944, page 12.



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feet. The ceiling lowered to 9000 feet around 1500. Good visibility and scattered light showers. Fresh to strong northeasterly winds. Moderate swell and rough sea.\*

At 0714, WICHITA with KNAPP departed TG 30.3 to join CTG 38.1.

At 0745, CTG 30.3 received a directive\*\* from COMTHIRDFLT which had been originated six and one-half hours earlier directing him to close the HOUSTON Group and to combine with that group. In compliance with these orders, CTG 30.3 changed course to port to close the HOUSTON Group which at the time was bearing 006°(T), distant twenty-seven miles.

At 0813 WICHITA received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch directing her to remain with TG 30.3.\*\*

At 0853 enemy aircraft began to close.

At about 0855, CTG 30.3 received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT wherein CTG 38.1 was directed to send one CVL and four destroyers to reinforce TG 30.3 and then to retire at 1400 to a fueling rendezvous to the eastward.

By 0955, CTG 30.3 had closed to within twelve miles of the HOUSTON Group but the merger was not accomplished until about noon, when the two towing groups took station with the CANBERRA Group operating in a position 2000 yards on the starboard beam of the HOUSTON Group with the guide, after 1220, in the MUNSEE as she was only able to make about 3.5 knots good. Course was set at 130°(T).

At 1635, COMCRUDIV SIX in WICHITA, with COWPENS, MILLER, CHARRETTE, KNAPP, BELL and BURNS rejoined TG 30.3 having been designated by CTG 38.1 for this duty in compliance with orders from COMTHIRDFLT.\*\*

At this time CTG 30.3, in order to facilitate handling of carriers, formed two task units. One was the Towing Unit (TU 30.3.1)\*\*\* consisting of the SANTA FE, BIRMINGHAM, CANBERRA in tow of MUNSEE, HOUSTON in tow of BOSTON, DESDIV ONE HUNDRED (COGSWELL, CAPERTON, INGERSOLL) THE SULLIVANS, STEPHEN POTTER, BOYD, COWELL, GRAYSON. The other unit was the Covering Unit (TU 30.3.2)\*\*\*\* consisting of WICHITA, MOBILE, CABOT, COWPENS, MILLER, CHARRETTE, KNAPP, BELL and BURNS. This unit was to provide air and surface support as desired.

CTG 30.3 directed CTU 30.3.2 to operate to the northward during darkness to provide timely warning of surface attack.

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\* Action Report CABOT, Action against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, The Visayas, and Japanese Fleet, Luzon, October 6th-14th and 20th-31st, 1944, Serial 069, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141610, October 1944 to CTG 30.3.

\*\*\* CTU (30.3.1) was Rear Admiral Laurance T. DuBose, USN.

\*\*\*\* CTU (30.3.2) was Rear Admiral Charles T. Joy, USN.

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Although throughout the day several bogies appeared, there were no air attacks and the expected dusk air attack failed to materialize.

The CABOT maintained a CAP of eight VF and a SNASP of four VF - four VT throughout the day. This was reinforced in the late afternoon by a CAP of eight VF and a SNASP of two VF - two VT from the COWPENS. This CAP reported having shot down three enemy planes.\* No planes nor pilots were lost by either the CABOT or the COWPENS.

At about 1810, CTG 30.3 received a directive from COMTHIRDFLT directing him to continue retirement towards Ulithi and to carry out the radio deception ordered in a previous dispatch. This required dummy radio transmission of from three to five messages daily.\*\*

(c) Operations of CTG 38.1 on October 15th.

At 0026 TG 38.1, which was operating to the northward of TG 30.3, was reinforced by the arrival of the SAN DIEGO, OAKLAND, MILLER and MARSHALL. This task group now consisted of the WASP, HORNET, COWPENS, MONTEREY, SAN DIEGO, OAKLAND, MILLER, MARSHALL, CHARRETTE, BURNS, BELL, CONNER, McCALLA, BROWN and IZARD.\*\*\*

During the forenoon destroyers of the task force fueled from the WASP and HORNET. Also, numerous enemy planes closed the formation, but because of the effective CAP none got close enough to do any damage.\*\*\*

At 0950 the WICHITA and KNAPP joined.

At 1400 the WICHITA, COWPENS, MILLER, BURNS, BELL, KNAPP, and CHARRETTE, in accordance with orders from COMTHIRDFLT,\*\*\*\* were detached and ordered to join CTG 30.3. At about 1410 TG 38.1 commenced operating on southeasterly courses, proceeding in a general direction towards fueling rendezvous.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1600 more enemy planes closed the group, but although most were driven off by the CAP, one or more dive bombers broke through and attacked the carriers. One dive bomber was destroyed by AA fire. No ships were hit.

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\* Action Report CABOT, Air Cover for TG 30.3, October 14th-18th, 1944, Serial 063, October 18th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report COMCRUDIV 13 (CTG 30.3) - Report THIRD Fleet Salvage Group, October 13th-17th, 1944, Serial 0086, October 28th, 1944, page 14.

\*\*\* War Diary SAN DIEGO, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141634, October 1944, to CTG 38.1.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary OAKLAND, October 15th, 1944.

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During the day, owing to repeated air attacks, a combat air patrol (CAP) of from sixteen to sixty VF and a SNASP of eight VF and four VB/VT was maintained.

At 1812, after planes had been recovered, CTG 38.1 continued retirement on easterly and southeasterly courses toward the 0600 rendezvous (Latitude 21°-00'N, Longitude 130°-00'E) with the fueling group,\* speed twenty-two knots.

CTG 38.1 estimated that his task group had been attacked throughout the day by a total of eighty planes attacking in groups of from two to twenty-five planes. Of these eighty planes, CTG 38.1 believed that his CAP had destroyed about fifty-two and his AA guns one - a total of fifty-three planes. His own losses were three VF\* and two pilots.\*\*

(d) Operations of CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 on October 15th.

CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 continued on toward their dawn fueling rendezvous. The task groups were shadowed intermittently by enemy aircraft until about 0317 when the last bogie faded from the radar screens.\*\*\*

At 0955 TG 38.3 rendezvoused with its fueling unit, TU 30.8.2, consisting of the LACKAWANNA, KASKASKIA, KENNEBAGO, PECOS, TOMAHAWK, with their escorts. Fueling commenced at 1031 and continued until 1926.\*\*\*\*

At 1032 TG 38.2 rendezvoused with its fueling unit, TU 30.8.7, consisting of the CHIKASKIA, SCHUYLKILL, ESCAMBIA with their escorts plus CALIENTE. Fueling commenced at 1123 and continued until 1940 when IOWA completed fueling.\*\*\*\*\*

During the forenoon CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 received orders from CTF 38 directing them upon completion of fueling, to rendezvous at 0600 on the following day in Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E and to be prepared

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\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 15th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report WASP, Operations against Okinawa Jima, Miyako Jima, Northern Luzon, Formosa, Manila Bay Area, Leyte, Support of Battle of Leyte Gulf, and Enemy Naval Units Western Visayas, October 2nd-27th, 1944, Serial 0040, October 28th, 1944, Enclosure (E) (Executive Officer's Report); also action Report HORNET, Ryuku Islands, Formosa, and Philippine Operations October 2nd-27th, 1944, Serial 0031, October 28th, 1944, Enclosure (E) (Medical Officer's Report).

\*\*\* War Diaries CTG 38.3 and LEXINGTON, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 15th, 1944

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary SCHUYLKILL, October 15th, 1944.



for long-range search and attack on the Japanese Fleet.\*

Also, during the afternoon, the escort carriers STEAMER BAY, NASSAU, BARNES, and SITKOH BAY, transferred (a) replacement aircraft as follows: to TG 38.2, twelve VF, nineteen VB, three VT, and two VF(N) - total thirty-six planes, and to TG 38.3, thirteen VF, eight VT - total twenty-one planes; a grand total of fifty-seven planes,\*\* and (b) replacement pilots and aircrewmen as follows: to TG 38.2, sixteen pilots and fourteen aircrewmen; to TG 38.3, nine pilots and ten aircrewmen;\*\*\* a grand total of twenty-five pilots and twenty-four aircrewmen. In return, the STEAMER BAY received eleven "flyable duds" from the BUNKER HILL, LEXINGTON, and INTREPID consisting of five VF, one VB and five VT.

From sunrise to sunset, CTG 38.2 maintained a CAP of twelve VF and a SNASP of four VF - four VB/VT;\*\*\*\* CTG 38.3 a CAP of eight VF and an ASP of four VB/VT.\*\*\*\*\* TG 38.2 CAP shot down one enemy plane during the night, and TG 38.3 CAP shot down five enemy planes during the day.

No airborne planes nor pilots were lost by either task group, although two VF were jettisoned.

At about 2000, both task groups in formation headed on a mean course 330°(T), speed 23 knots for the morning rendezvous.\*\*\*\*\*

(e) Operations of TG 38.4 on October 15th.

CTG 38.4 continued on towards his fueling rendezvous - Latitude 18°-00'N, Longitude 127°-00'E. However, at 0100\*\*\*\*\* he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT which cancelled his fueling rendezvous for that day, and which directed instead that he proceed immediately to a striking position off the east coast of Luzon and launch maximum strikes on central Luzon during daylight, October 15th. This dispatch further directed that his objective was the destruction of enemy aircraft and air installations.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary COMDESRON 50, October 15th, 1944.

\*\* War Diaries STEAMER BAY, NASSAU, SITKOH BAY, BARNES, ESSEX, LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, LANGLEY, INTREPID, INDEPENDENCE, BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diaries STEAMER BAY, NASSAU, SITKOH BAY, CTG 38.3, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diaries INTREPID, BUNKER HILL, HANCOCK, INDEPENDENCE, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMDESDIV 110, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary BILOXI, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141540, October 1944, to CTG 38.4.



At 0210, in accordance with the above instructions, CTG 38.4 changed course to 230°(T), increased speed to twenty-four knots, and headed for his new launching position.\* Sunrise was at 0636.

At 0745 bogies were intercepted closing the formation. The CAP was increased, and an enemy two-engine land-bomber was shot down at 0830.

At 0848, when in position bearing about 045°(T), distant 220 miles from Manila, he launched his initial air strike against the enemy air-fields in the Manila area.\*\* The enemy had been alerted, but the launchings were made without opposition.

The flying conditions were average with surface wind from the east northeast of about fifteen knots. Cumulus clouds covering about 4/10 of the sky prevailed during the forenoon, but this rapidly increased to 9/10 during the afternoon watch, and by sundown (1814) the sky was overcast. The ceiling, which at launching had been unlimited, rapidly lowered so that between 1200 and 1600 it averaged about 8,000 feet, and by sundown it had fallen to 900 feet. The visibility was about fifteen miles, the sea was slight with a slight swell. There was an equatorial front passing through the central Philippines and extending towards Guam.\*\*\*

The air attack delivered by CTG 38.4 differed from the air attacks of the previous days in that the air strikes in this case were not preceded by a dawn fighter sweep due to the distance from Manila.\*\*\*\* As a consequence, TG 38.4's initial strike was intercepted over Luzon by fifty or sixty enemy interceptors which were destroyed or driven off by the fighter escort which were highly effective.\*\*\*\* It is significant of the deterioration of the quality of the Japanese pilots that not one of the enemy planes got through to attack the bombers.

The air attack plan called for two air strikes (ABLE and BAKER)  
(a) Strike ABLE, which was launched at 0848 and recovered between 1230 and 1320, was composed of thirty-three VF, one VF(P), twenty VB, and eighteen VT, a total of seventy-two planes. The fighters were armed with rockets; the bombers with 500 or 1000 pound bombs. The large bombs were carried by the torpedo planes. The attack which struck at

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\* Action Report, FRANKLIN, Operations Against the Enemy at Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0039, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944, Appendix One to Enclosure (A), (Aerlogical Data).

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944, page 11.



1025 was successful. Considerable damage was reportedly done to the installations at Neilson Airfield and Nichols Airfield in the Manila area, and numerous enemy aircraft were destroyed in the air and on the ground. In fact, CTG 38.4 claimed having destroyed, in air combat, thirty-six land-type fighters and eight carrier-type fighters.\* (b) Strike BAKER, which was launched at 1113, consisted of eleven VF, nineteen VB, fifteen VT - a total of forty-five planes. It had been planned to launch Strike BAKER earlier. However, owing to the fact that the carrier task group was subjected to heavy air attacks between 1022 and 1047, during which time the FRANKLIN was hit by a Japanese bomb, it was not possible to do this. Then, owing to a shortage of fighter coverage, Strike BAKER was directed to orbit until the bogy situation had cleared up. Finally, owing to the fact that there now was insufficient fuel for its scheduled mission, it was recalled, and landed between 1311 and 1325.\*\* During this attack CTG 38.4 claimed having destroyed nineteen enemy planes.

The damage to the FRANKLIN was very light. The bomb landed near the deck edge elevator, and damaged the outboard corner, but the elevator remained in operation. Personnel losses were fortunately slight.\*\*\*

Between the launching of Strikes ABLE and BAKER, and, in fact, at about 1000\*\*\*\* CTG 38.4 received an additional dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT. This dispatch, among other things, directed him, upon completion of the above strikes, to proceed to the fueling rendezvous - Latitude 16°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E - to arrive at 0700 the next morning.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1130 CTG 38.4 appears to have received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch to all Task Force Commanders, wherein COMTHIRDFLT stated: (a) that he was disposing his forces for fleet action and (b), that except for CTG 38.4's Luzon strike no fast carriers would be available to support KING II until further notice and wherein COMTHIRDFLT directed CTG 38.4 to report the Luzon enemy air situation direct to COMSOWESPAC as soon as possible.\*\*\*\*\*

This dispatch must have been quite a surprise to CTG 38.4, for this appears to have been the first information that he had received of the proximity of fleet action. However, it should not have unduly concerned him, for nothing in this dispatch modified his activities against Luzon nor changed his fueling rendezvous.

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\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944, page 11.

\*\* War Diary COMDESRON SIX, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report FRANKLIN, Action with Japanese Aircraft, October 15th, 1944, Serial 0038, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary BILOXI, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141640, October 1944 to CTG 38.4.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150149, October 1944 to, among others, all Task Force Commanders THIRDFLT.



At 1200, when in Latitude 16°-34'N, Longitude 124°-21'E, CTG 38.4 headed in a northeasterly direction towards his 0700 fueling rendezvous for the following morning,\* and recovered both of his air strikes en route. Since he had not accomplished his assigned task of making maximum air strikes against enemy airfields in central Luzon but, instead, had made but one air strike against a limited number of these airfields, his decision to discontinue air strikes against central Luzon and commence his retirement is subject to analysis. He gave as his reason for this decision that the persistent air attacks on his carrier group had forced him to cancel other air strikes.\*\* However, does this reason appear adequate when the various facts relating thereto are considered? What are these facts? They are, (a) the distance to the next morning's fueling rendezvous could have had no effect, for that rendezvous in a direct course (092°(T)) was only 123 miles away with nineteen hours available to reach it; (b) Strike ABLE against Luzon airfields and Japanese aircraft based there had been effective but there were still many targets, notably numerous aircraft at Neilson and Nichols fields as well as thirty to forty medium to large AO's and AK's in Manila Harbor and Subic Bay which required destruction.\*\* (c) Up to this time, his task groups had been subjected to but one series of attacks, which except for slight damage to the FRANKLIN, had been very ineffective. In fact, but for a single two-engine land-bomber shot down twenty-four miles from the task group at 1247, no enemy aircraft had approached within radar range of the group until more than three hours after Strike BAKER had been launched.\*\*\* Would it not seem that this reaction was considerably less than might have been anticipated by a carrier task group approaching a large well-defended land mass such as Luzon? (d) His decision to recall Strike BAKER, which had been launched at 1113, and to retire was made at about 1200, since from that time onward, the task group was on a northeasterly course en route to its fueling rendezvous.\*\*\*\* (e) The surface wind direction was east northeasterly, away from the target area, making it difficult for the group to conduct flight operations and also to close the target. However, since the force of the wind averaged about 18 knots,\*\*\*\*

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 141640, October 1944 to CTG 38.4.

\*\* CTG 38.4 Dispatch 160348 October 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\* Action Report ENTERPRISE, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0053, October 31st, 1944, page 24.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas, Philippine Islands in support of the occupation of Leyte, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944, page 12.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944, Appendix 1 to Enclosure (A), (Aerlogical Data).



it should have been possible to conduct such operations without appreciably increasing the range. But this was not done. Instead, the task group during the day remained beyond the 220 miles from which position Strike ABLE was launched at 0848.\*

Does it not seem clear then that had Strike BAKER been landed and reserviced at 1200 instead of about 1325, and had it been relaunched prior to the recovery of Strike ABLE, there would have been ample time and aircraft to make a second successful strike against the central Luzon area? In this connection, it is important to point out that in addition to the thirty-three VF aircraft in Strike ABLE, there were some seventy VF aircraft available to provide suitable escort for Strike BAKER, and protection for the task group. Why, therefore, CTG 38.4 did not endeavor to accomplish more fully his task assigned is not clear, but it seems highly probable that his decisions were unduly influenced by the bomb damage received by his flagship.

No protective air searches were made by CTG 38.4.

During the early afternoon, CTG 38.4 received COMTHIRDFLT's dispatch directing him, upon completion of fueling on the following day, to rendezvous with TF 38 at 0600, October 17th in Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E.

During the retirement, there were no bogies until about 1430, when two very large raids were reported.\*\* The CAP was vectored out, and commencing at about 1515, succeeded in breaking up the raids so that no enemy planes were able to attack the task group. By 1700 the danger was over. At this time the CAP returned, and several of the planes made water landings.\*\*\*

Plane losses received throughout the day by TG 38.4 from all causes were eleven VF, one VB - a total of twelve planes. Of these planes, five were jettisoned. Pilot personnel losses were a total of two pilots being counted as lost or missing.\*\*\*\* No aircrewmen were lost.

Throughout the day CTG 38.4 maintained, in general, a combat air patrol (CAP) over his task group of from eight to twelve VF, although in the late afternoon the CAP was increased to a maximum of forty-eight fighters at 1700. A SNASP of four VF - four VT was maintained during the afternoon.\*\*\*\*

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\* Action Report CTG 38.4, Action Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon, Philippine Islands, Visayas, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 00263, November 16th, 1944. (Appended Track Chart).

\*\* Ibid, page 12.

\*\*\* War Diary COMDESRON 6, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Naval War College Analysis of Action Reports, Aircraft Action Reports, and War Diaries.



During the remainder of the night no enemy planes were contacted, and it appeared from this that the task group's retirement was not trailed by the enemy. This was correct.

(5) Operations on October 16th:

(a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT.

COMTHIRDFLT, in the NEW JERSEY with TG 38.2, took no further action during the early morning of October 16th. His plans were made, his forces were moving in accordance with these plans. He appears to have awaited the day's events with confidence.

At about 0320 he received word through COMNAVGROUPCHINA that the CG, U.S. Army Forces CBI had authorized the searches in the South China Sea north of Kamranh Bay-Lingayen Line as requested by CINCPA, employing four planes.\* It is possible that he considered the number of planes employed inadequate.

At about 0400 he received word from COMNAVGROUPCHINA that two battleships plus fifteen other ships had been sighted by a photo-mission of B-29's at Takao, Formosa at 1500 the preceding day.\*\* Although he did not know it, this report was in error - no Japanese battleships were in the area.

At about 0450 he received word from COMNAVGROUPCHINA that the searches would start at 1100.\*\*\*

At about 1000 he received word from CTG 30.3 that TG 30.3 was at 0800 in Latitude 20°-56'N, Longitude 125°-07'E; that the PAWNEE would soon relieve the BOSTON of the tow of the HOUSTON; that the flooding of the HOUSTON was under control; that most of her crew had been taken off, and that the CANBERRA was in fair shape with no list.\*\*\*\*

At about 1116 he felt that the possibility of a fleet action requiring all task groups of TF 38 was remote for, at that time, he directed CTG 38.1 (a) to proceed to a position east of Samar arriving at dawn, October 18th, (b) to strike the Visayas on October 18th and 19th, and (c) at 0600, October 20th to rendezvous with CTG 38.4 and provide direct air support for the Leyte operation on that day.\*\*\*\*\* In line

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\* COMNAVGRPCCHINA Dispatch 151755, October 1944 to CINCPA.

\*\* COMNAVGRPCCHINA Dispatch 151831, October 1944 to CINCPA and COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCCHINA Dispatch 151920, October 1944 to CINCPA.

\*\*\*\* CTG 30.3 Dispatch 152355, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160216, October 1944 to CTF 38.



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with this plan, he, at 1119 notified CTG's 38.1 and 38.4 that at 1200 TG's 38.2 and 38.3 would proceed towards a new rendezvous, Latitude 18°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E to arrive at 0600, October 17th.\* In addition, at 1124, he notified CINCPAC and all Task Forces, THIRD Fleet that his morning searches had been negative but that daylight Japanese snoopers were active.\*\*

At 1124 COMTHIRDFLT amplified his orders to the task groups of TF 38. He directed TG's 38.2 and 38.3 to operate in the vicinity of Latitude 18°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E and be alert to engage the enemy north of this area, or to reinforce Allied groups to the south. He directed TG 38.1 to fulfill KING II commitments and guard Surigao Strait on arrival east of Samar at dawn October 18th, and ordered TG 38.4 to guard San Bernardino Strait and attack Luzon commencing October 17th.\*\*

This decision to send TG 38.1 to the Visayas and TG 38.4 to Luzon and to interpose TG's 38.2 and 38.3 in protecting position for TG's 38.1 and 38.4 was sound. No enemy forces in any concentration equal to even one of his carrier groups had been discovered; no enemy carriers had been observed, and none had been reported as departing the Empire by TF 71 submarines nor by CINCPAC intelligence. Only four enemy battle-ships had been reported and these were apparently old types such as the KONGO class whereas, in TG's 38.2 and 38.3, he had six modern battle-ships of the IOWA and SOUTH DAKOTA classes; the advance landings were to occur in the Leyte area on the following day and, whereas some of the THIRD Fleet commitments in that area could be handled temporarily by the escort carriers of SEVENTH Fleet, these carriers had tactical responsibilities (close air support) with the ground forces which might require all of their carrier-based aircraft.\*\*\*

At 1146 he directed CTG 38.4 to proceed to strike Luzon commencing dawn October 17th; to maintain reconnaissance of western approaches to San Bernardino Strait; to continue strikes on the 18th and 19th to obtain certain photo coverage assigned by CTF 38 Operation Order 11-44 to TG's 38.2, 38.3 and 38.4; to rendezvous with TG 38.1 at 0600 October 20th in Latitude 11°-25'N, Longitude 126°-20'E and provide direct air support Leyte operation as ordered; and to be prepared fuel October 21st.\*\*\*\*

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160219, October 1944 to CTG's 38.1 and 38.4.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160224, October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOPAC, all TFC's THIRD Fleet, etc.

\*\*\* CTG 77.4 Operation Plan 2-44, Serial 00075, October 5th, 1944, Annex D.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160246, October 1944 to CTG 38.4.

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At 1149 he directed CTG 30.8 (Fueling Group) to be in assigned station at 0800, October 21st to fuel TG's 38.1 and 38.4.\*

At 1209 he changed the basic fueling area where the tanker pool was maintained to Latitude 18°-00'N, Longitude 130°-00'E.\*\*

At 1246 he directed CTG 30.3 that CRUDIV THIRTEEN and DESDIV ONE HUNDRED were to be detached after dark, October 16th, were to proceed to basic fueling area and fuel, then rendezvous with CTF 38 at Latitude 18°-30'N, Longitude 126°-30'E where report for duty with CTG 38.3. He directed COMCRUDIV SIX in WICHITA to assume command TG 30.3 upon departure COMCRUDIV THIRTEEN.\*\*\*

At 1250 he appears to have received word from the FOURTEENTH Air Force that at 0130 that morning one of its planes had contacted an all-naval convoy of six to eight ships in Latitude 21°-54'N, Longitude 116°-30'E heading towards Takao and that the plane had sunk one cruiser and probably sunk one destroyer of this convoy.\*\*\*\* If he did not receive this dispatch at this time, he should have received it from COMNAVGRP CHINA at about 1330\*\*\*\*\* and from CINCPQA at about 1600.\*\*\*\*\* This claim of damage inflicted by the FOURTEENTH Air Force is not understood since the Japanese do not report any cruisers or destroyers being sunk or even damaged in this area on this date.\*\*\*\*\*

Sometime after 1425 he commenced receiving reports from various search groups which reported that two to three enemy task groups consisting of carriers, battleships, heavy and light cruisers, and destroyers were in the vicinity. Exactly what information he actually received is not clear because his war diary and his action report are almost completely silent in regard to the above contacts, and refer only to a report received about two battleships (BB), one light cruiser (CL) and eight destroyers.\*\*\*\*\* However, from the action reports and war

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160249, October 1944 to CTG's 30.8, 38.1, 38.4.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160309, October 1944 to CTG's 30.7, 30.8, 30.9, 57.14, and CTU 30.8.8.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160346, October 1944 to CTG 30.3.

\*\*\*\* COMNAVUNIT 14th Air Force Dispatch 160326, October, 1944 to COMNAVGRPCHINA.

\*\*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 160403, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT and CINCPQA.

\*\*\*\*\* CINCPQA Dispatch 160628, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT, COMSOWESPAC, etc.

\*\*\*\*\* Final Report of Ministry of Imperial Japanese Navy dated January 14th, 1946, to USSBS Memorandum No. Nav 11 dated October 16th, 1945.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT October 16th, 1944.

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diaries of the two task group commanders and of certain of the carriers, as well as from certain dispatches sent by COMTHIRDFLT to CTG 30.3, it is clear that he received other reports as well. The first reports he received, which reports appeared to come from several search planes, indicated that the enemy were possibly in two principal groups. These were, (a) one large carrier (CV), two battleships (BB), one heavy cruiser (CA), two light cruisers (CL) and eight destroyers (DD), (b) two large carriers (CV), one light carrier (CVL), one light cruiser (CL) and four destroyers (DD).\* There were indications also that there may have been a third group of unknown composition (possibly two battleships (BB), one light cruiser (CL) and four destroyers (DD)).\*\*

The reports, as received, were so garbled as to present to the commander a completely confused picture of the enemy forces. CTG 38.3 states that the enemy's longitude as received was about 200 miles east of the easternmost search sector;\* the INTREPID records three separate contacts received which varied in position by 840 miles.\*\* None of the reports correctly indicated the originating aircraft.\*\*\*

COMTHIRDFLT was therefore forced to delay his attack until he had obtained sufficient accurate information to warrant his taking offensive action and launching his air groups against one or all of these groups.

Meanwhile, at about 1445, he was advised by COMNAVGRPCHINA that the B-29's of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command had made contacts as follows, (a) at 1300 two battleships and eight small ships at Takao, Formosa; and (b) at 1315 one destroyer thirteen miles up the coast from Takao and headed southeast at twenty knots.\*\*\*\* Contact report (a) was incorrect. There were no battleships in this area at this time.

Since Takao (southwest Formosa) was about 480 miles away and since these Japanese ships would have had to run the gantlet of CTF 17's submarines, COMTHIRDFLT evidently considered them unimportant at this time, for neither his war diary nor his action report makes any reference to this report.

About 1522 he received a dispatch from CTG 30.3 which reported the HOUSTON torpedoed again in the stern\*\*\*\*\* and at about 1600 an amplifying dispatch which among other items reported that the HOUSTON, which at 1400 was in Latitude 20°-45'N, Longitude 125°-24'E, was still in tow, although the Commanding Officer desired to remove all personnel.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary CTG 38.3 October 16th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary INTREPID October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.2 October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 160515, October, 1944 to CINCPQA.

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 30.3 Dispatch 160522, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 30.3 Dispatch 160608, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

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COMTHIRDFLT's efforts to obtain accurate information concerning the Japanese surface forces reported by his search planes at 1425, required about one hour and thirty-five minutes, so it was not until about 1600 that he felt confident of their composition and location.\* He decided, at this time, that the enemy was composed of two surface groups consisting of two carriers (CV), one light carrier (CVL), three light cruisers, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers and that these groups were about 200 miles north of TG 30.3. At 1617 he advised CTG 30.3 to this effect and directed him not to detach CRUDIV THIRTEEN and its escorts that night.\*\*

This evaluation of his contact reports by COMTHIRDFLT was completely in error, but was not the fault of himself or of his staff, but was instead the result of faulty plane to ship communications. Actually, but one contact had been made, and that by one plane only - a BUNKER HILL plane. This plane reported at 1430 having sighted, (a) two battleships, one light cruiser and four destroyers in Latitude  $26^{\circ}-27'N$ , Longitude  $130^{\circ}-28'E$ . The battleships were refueling the destroyers astern on course  $240^{\circ}(T)$ . On sighting the BUNKER HILL plane they cast off the destroyers and retired on course  $300^{\circ}(T)$  and, (b) three destroyers about twenty miles further west on course  $030^{\circ}(T)$ \*\*\*. The pilot of the plane, during this time (fifty-five minutes) that he remained in contact with the enemy, endeavored to get an acknowledgement for this contact report, but was unable to do so. He therefore, after leaving the contact and while returning to base, relayed his report via several other planes.

Unfortunately, these relaying planes relayed the contact report so incorrectly as to give COMTHIRDFLT a false impression as to enemy composition and location and caused him to believe that the several relaying planes were reporting original contacts.

Why COMTHIRDFLT believed that there were enemy carriers with the enemy surface forces when none had been reported heretofore is nowhere explained, but it will be remembered that he did not consider that the submarine coverage of the HIT PARADE was adequate\*\*\*\*. Does it not seem highly probable therefore that he felt that these carriers, which had been reported earlier as in the Empire and which had not been reported as departing the Empire, might readily have passed through Sungo Suido without detection?

Why then, if he felt that these Japanese groups were composed as stated, and if he was satisfied as to their general location, did he not

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\* War Diary CTG 38.3 October 16th, 1944.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160717, October 1944 to CTG 30.3.

\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 8, October 16th, 1944 forwarded by BUNKER HILL, Serial 0304, October 30th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 272215, September 1944 to CINCPAC.



launch a powerful air strike against them? The answer was, (a) the Japanese were at least 300 miles away,\* (b) they had commenced retiring at 1425, and (c) but three hours of daylight remained (end of evening twilight was 1856). This decision not to launch an air strike was correct since, (a) the Striking Force was not being trailed at the time and its course and speed was therefore not known, (b) 300 miles was beyond the maximum effective radius of an American carrier attack group, and (c) night landing operations of attack groups was hazardous, at best because of the lack of proficiency of the air groups in night operations. This latter factor might not have been a deterrent, had (a) and (b) above been more favorable.

That COMTHIRDFLT was surprised by the strength of these Japanese forces seems evident for at 1645 he cancelled his instructions to CTG 38.1 to proceed to a position east of Samar and directed that commander to Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E.\*\* This was the area in which TG's 38.2 and 38.3 were operating and would therefore give him a task force of three carrier task groups once the rendezvous had been effected.

At about 1700 he should have received a dispatch from COMNAVGRPCHINA that the B-29's of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command had contacted enemy surface forces as follows: (a) at 1316, one battleship at Latitude 23°-00'N, Longitude 118°-32'E, course 130°(T), (b) at 1346, one unidentified ship in Latitude 23°-15'N, Longitude 119°-40'E, course 070°(T), speed fourteen, and (c) at 1255 four freighters several miles off Tainan, Formosa.\*\*\* If he did not receive this dispatch at this time, he should have received it from CINCPQA at about 1910. Contact (a) was in error since there were no battleships in the area at this time.

By 1732 COMTHIRDFLT had discovered that his original estimate of the strength of the enemy task groups was in error, for he advised CTG 30.3 to this effect at this time. He also informed CTG 30.3 that the contacts at 1425 as now developed were, one large carrier (CV), two battleships (BB), one heavy cruiser (CA), two light cruisers (CL) and eight destroyers (DD) in Latitude 26°-27'N, Longitude 130°-28'E on course 250°(T), speed twenty. He further informed CTG 30.3 that there were no contacts to the north or west of him.\*\*\*\*

Although the records available to this study do not say so, it seems clear that some few minutes after the BUNKER HILL plane, which had made the contact, had landed on the BUNKER HILL (1709)\*\*\*\*\* the pilot gave the

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\* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT, October 16th, 1944.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160745, October 1944 to CTG 38.1.

\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 160658, October 1944 to CINCPQA reencyphered by CINCPQA as 160948 to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160832, October 1944 to CTG 30.3.

\*\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 8, October 16th, 1944 forwarded by BUNKER HILL, Serial 0304, October 30th, 1944.



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correct contact report to the Commanding Officer, but in view of the night search ordered later by COMTHIRDFLT, it seems reasonable to assume that COMTHIRDFLT was not informed.

About 1830 COMTHIRDFLT, if he was listening in on the Japanese broadcasts beamed to the U.S. West Coast, probably intercepted a Japanese statement that they had sunk ten carriers, two battleships, one destroyer and damaged one battleship, four cruisers and eleven unidentified warships, and that, "the Japanese forces are still in hot pursuit of the enemy task force which is fleeing in defeat."\*

At about 1900 he was advised by CTG 30.3 that he had removed from the HOUSTON all but 200 of his crew; that the HOUSTON was being towed with difficulty at about three knots, and that she had a list of about ten degrees.\*\*

At about 1930 he received information from COMNAVGRPCHINA that the daily search of the South China Sea, which was to commence at 1100, had been delayed; that the search would be made twice daily at 2000 and at 0800; that each search would now be made by two planes and would make complete coverage of area, Huiling Island (Latitude 21°-35'N, Longitude 111°-53'E) - Kamranh Bay - Lingayen Gulf - Huiling Island.\*\*\*

At about 2013 he directed the INDEPENDENCE to search the sectors 345°-015°(T) and 245°-255°(T) to a distance of 300 miles, in order to locate the enemy force which had been reported there earlier.\*\*\*\* These searches were launched at 2147.\*\*\*\*\* The reason given for searching the above sectors is not understood. A study of Diagram H shows that not one of the afternoon contacts was made in either of these sectors. However, the Diagram does show that had the enemy continued on course 250°(T) (an erroneous course evaluated from the garbled contact reports), speed twenty knots, from the 1425 position (Latitude 26°-27'N, Longitude 130°-28'E), the northern night search might have discovered him. Actually, the enemy retired on a northwesterly course which passed north of Amami Oshima\*\*\*\*\* and was well beyond the radius of search.

At about 2030 despite his message to CTG 30.3 that there were no enemy forces to the west and north of that task group he modified his orders to CTG 38.1 and ordered that commander to proceed to the vicinity

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\* War Diary CINCPA, October 16th, 1944 Action Summary.

\*\* CTG 30.3 Dispatch 160850, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\* COMNAVGRPCHINA Dispatch 160953, October 1944 to CINCPA.

\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary INDEPENDENCE, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC 161638, NA11739, paragraph IC2b.

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Latitude 21°-00'N, Longitude 127°-00'E; to arrive at 0500, October 17th; and to launch an air search to the west and northwest at dawn. He further stated that he would remain in the vicinity of Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E.\*

It seems reasonable to assume that before midnight COMTHIRDFLT had learned the composition of the enemy task force as reported by the BUNKER HILL plane earlier that day, since his War Diary for October 16th reports the composition to have been two battleships (BB), one light cruiser (CL) and eight destroyers (DD).\*\* Since he had received no reports by midnight from his night search being conducted by the INDEPENDENCE, he was reasonably confident that the enemy task group was beyond 300 miles and had therefore retired. However, he appears to have decided to await more conclusive information before changing his plans.

(b) Operations of CTG 30.3 October 16th.

TG 30.3 continued toward Ulithi on course 130° (T) throughout the day. The enemy reconnoitered the task group about 0100 and at intervals thereafter with one plane, but it was not until much later in the day that they took any offensive action.\*\*\*

The weather conditions showed little improvement over the previous days with the exception that the winds, which had been fresh northeasterly, commenced dropping off. The skies were high overcast with unlimited ceilings and good visibility. There was a moderate sea and swell. On the whole, conditions were average or better.\*\*\*\*

At 0403 the PAWNEE was contacted and directed to close TU 30.3.1. Owing to difficulties aboard the HOUSTON, no tow transfer operations could be attempted until 0915.\*\*\* These operations were finally completed at 1036, but it was not until 1300 that the PAWNEE finally got up to her maximum safe towing speed.\*\*\*\*\*

During the forenoon and early afternoon all HOUSTON's personnel on the destroyers, with the exception of a few who could not be transferred prior to the afternoon air attacks, were transferred to the cruisers.\*\*\*

At 0743 CTG 30.3 directed CTU 30.3.2 to conduct a search as soon as possible to cover the sector 235°-310°, and to conduct a late afternoon

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 161104, October 1944 to CTG 38.1.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT War Diary, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report COMCRUDIV 13 (CTG 30.3) Report THIRD Fleet Salvage Group October 13th-17th, 1944, Serial 0086, October 28th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CABOT, Air Cover for TG 30.3, October 14th-18th, 1944, Serial 063, October 18th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary PAWNEE, October 16th, 1944.

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search through the same sector.\* The CABOT was designated to conduct the morning search and the COWPENS the afternoon search.

At 0920 the CABOT launched a search through the sector 235°-310°(T) to a distance of 150 miles,\*\* to provide early warning of the anticipated sortie of enemy mopping-up units from the Luzon Straits area. The search which returned at 1215 was negative, although it did succeed in shooting down one enemy plane.\*\* All planes returned safely.

At 0942 the CABOT which was directing the air operations for both the CABOT and the COWPENS was directed to extend the afternoon search to 200 miles if practicable.

At 1130 COMCRUDIV TEN in the BOSTON, in company with the BOYD and GRAYSON, joined TU 30.3.2. At 1308 COMCRUDIV TEN assumed command of TU 30.3.2. This unit now consisted of BOSTON, WICHITA, MOBILE, COWPENS, CABOT, MILLER, BURNS, BELL, KNAPP, CHARRETTE, BOYD and GRAYSON.

Commencing at about 1252 several large groups of enemy aircraft were observed on the radar screen. These were an attack group of 107 aircraft from six different air groups operating from Formosa.\*\*\* Further transfer of personnel operations were cancelled and preparations were made to repel an attack. At 1315 a large bogey of from sixty to seventy-five planes, distance about sixty miles was plotted, with a second but smaller, bogey also at sixty miles. The CABOT CAP shot down thirty-two planes of the large bogey; the COWPENS CAP shot down nine of the small bogey.\*\*\*\* The Japanese admitted losing twenty-seven planes out of seventy which attacked.\*\*\*

At about 1346 TU 30.3.1 was attacked by three enemy torpedo planes. One plane headed for the HOUSTON, and although it was finally destroyed by gunfire it succeeded at 1348, in torpedoing the HOUSTON for the second time, striking the starboard side at about frame 145.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1430 the MOBILE, BOYD and GRAYSON were ordered to rejoin TU 30.3.1 which they effected at 1515.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Action Report COMCRUDIV 13 (CTG 30.3) Report THIRD Fleet Salvage Group October 13th-17th, 1944, Serial 0086, October 28th, 1944.
  - \*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 29, forwarded by CABOT, Serial 0024, November 1944.
  - \*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer and SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
  - \*\*\*\* Action Report COWPENS 1400, October 15th-2230, October 17th, 1944, Serial 0027, October 17th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report HOUSTON, October 16th, 1944, Serial 0135, October 29th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report MOBILE, Operations of Task Group 30.3, Protecting Crippled CANBERRA and HOUSTON, October 13th-17th, 1944, Serial 0026, October 21st, 1944.

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At about 1455 CTG 30.5 decided to transfer to the destroyers 300 of the personnel remaining on board the HOUSTON. This left a skeleton crew of about 200 officers and men. Owing to the HOUSTON's yaw and roll, it was necessary to effect the transfer by swimming.\*

At 1525 the COWPENS launched a search of four VF, four VT to search the sector  $235^{\circ}$ - $310^{\circ}$ (T) to a distance of 150 miles. Why the CABOT found it impracticable to extend the searches to 200 miles is not available to this study, but it is possible that due to the situation earlier, the Commanding Officer, in order to land his planes before darkness found it advisable to limit the late afternoon search to 150 miles. The search returned at 1802. When it is remembered that Japanese air attacks were generally made in strength at dusk, and that sunset was at 1856, this decision seems correct. The results of this search were negative. No planes were lost.

At 1530 CTG 30.3 received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT ordering CRUDIV THIRTEEN and DESDIV ONE HUNDRED to proceed after dark to fueling rendezvous and then to report to CTG 38.3.\* However, at 1640 he received a dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT which cancelled the above orders and at the same time advised him that an enemy group of two carriers (CV), one light carrier (CVL) one heavy cruiser (CA) and four destroyers (DD) was about 200 miles to the north of TG 30.3.\*

At about 1830 CTG 30.3 was advised by COMTHIRDFLT by dispatch that the new evaluations placed the enemy about 430 miles to the northeast of TG 30.3 and changed its composition to one carrier (CV), two battleships (BB), one heavy cruiser (CA), two light cruisers (CL), and eight destroyers (DD). This relieved the tension within the task group as attack, not only by surface ships but by carrier aircraft, had been expected.

Throughout the forenoon CTG 30.3 maintained a CAP of eight VF and a SNASP of four VF - four VT. However, when the large enemy attack came in the early afternoon, additional planes were scrambled so that at 1400 there were twenty-six fighters over the task group. The maximum fighters were in the air at about 1520. At this time, the CABOT and COWPENS CAP of twenty-six planes was reinforced by sixteen fighters from the BUNKER HILL with CTG 38.2 and the LEXINGTON with CTG 38.3, making a total CAP of forty-two fighters.\*\* No additional Japanese planes were observed until about 2300 when a single bogey appeared and commenced reconnoitering the formation.\* CTG 30.3 continued on towards Ulithi on course  $130^{\circ}$ (T).

(c) Operations of CTG 38.1 on October 16th.

CTG 38.1 continued on course  $175^{\circ}$ (T) speed fifteen knots towards his designated fueling rendezvous. At 0215 he

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\* Action Report COMCRUDIV 13 (CTG 30.3) Report THIRD Fleet Salvage Group October 13th-17th, 1944, Serial 0086, October 28th, 1944.

\*\* Action Reports, Aircraft Action Reports and War Diaries, CABOT and COWPENS, October 16th, 1944.



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contacted TG's 38.2 and 38.3,\* who were proceeding to their dawn launching position. At about 0628 he rendezvoused with TG 30.8.2 (fueling group) at Latitude 20°-45'N, Longitude 129°-45'E and commenced fueling immediately.\*\* The fueling group was composed of the TAPPAHANNOCK, PAMANSET, MISSISSINEWA, and three destroyers.\*\*\*

At 0720, TG 38.1 was reinforced by TG 30.2 consisting of the heavy cruisers CHESTER, PENSACOLA, SALT LAKE CITY and the destroyers CASE, CASSIN, CUMMINGS, DUNLAP, DOWNES and FANNING, at which time TG 30.2 was dissolved.\* TG 38.1 now consisted of the WASP, HORNET, MONTEREY, CHESTER, SALT LAKE CITY, PENSACOLA, SAN DIEGO, OAKLAND, IZARD, CONNER, BROWN, MARSHALL, McCALLA, WOODWORTH, DUNLAP, FANNING, CUMMINGS, CASE, CASSIN, DOWNES.

At 0730, BARNES (CVE) and its escort, the PARKS joined CTG 38.1.\*\*\*\*

Also, at 0730, BARNES transferred nine replacement pilots to HORNET. Between 1056 and 1346 she transferred, in addition to the pilots, replacement planes as follows: to HORNET twelve VF, two VT, two VB; to WASP six VF, three VT, six VB; to MONTEREY three VF. She lost one VF intended for HORNET by a forced landing, although the pilot was recovered.\*\*\*\*

At 1503, fueling was completed and at 1507 CTG 38.1 headed for Samar in accordance with a directive from COMTHIRDFLT, received earlier in the afternoon, which directed him to proceed to arrive off Samar, dawn October 18th and strike the Visayas.\*\*\*\*\*

However, at about 1715 CTG 38.1 received a dispatch to proceed to Latitude 22°-00'N; Longitude 128°-00'E at best speed.\*\*\*\*\* Therefore, at about 1752, he headed on course 290°(T), speed twenty-four knots. He knew from reports which had been received during the day that Japanese combatant ships were moving along the coasts of China, Formosa and southern Japan;\*\*\*\*\* that strong elements of the Japanese Combined Fleet were at sea about 250 miles to the northward,\*\*\*\*\* and he presumably realized that COMTHIRDFLT was disposing his forces for action.

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\* Action Report WASP and Air Group 14, Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Miyako Jima, Northern Luzon, Formosa, Manila Bay Area, Leyte and Enemy Naval Units Western Visayas, October 2nd-27th, 1944, Serial 0040, October 28th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary MONTEREY, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Reports various oilers concerned.

\*\*\*\* War Diary BARNES, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160216, October 1944 to CTG 38.1.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160745, October 1944 to CTG 38.1.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary PENSACOLA, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary OAKLAND, October 16th, 1944.

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However, at about 2030 CTG 38.1 received another dispatch from COMTHIRDFLT which directed him to proceed to vicinity Latitude 21°-00'N, Longitude 127°-00'E, to arrive at 0500 October 17th, and to launch a search to the west and northwest at dawn.\* Therefore, in accordance with this second dispatch he, at 2030, headed for the new rendezvous.\*\* At 2230 he changed course to 240°(T) and speed to 18.5 knots.\*\*\*

During the day, TG 38.1 maintained a CAP of about eight VF and a SNASP of eight VF - four VB/VT. No contacts were made.

Two VB from the HORNET were jettisoned.

(d) Operations of CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 on October 16th.

TG's 38.2 and 38.3 arrived at their morning rendezvous on schedule and immediately launched air searches as directed by COMTHIRDFLT.

Flying conditions were generally average. The winds were northeasterly of moderate to fresh velocity and the sea was moderate.

Both task groups conducted morning and afternoon searches, and TG 38.2 conducted a night search as well. The BUNKER HILL and the HANCOCK conducted the searches from TG 38.2; the ESSEX from TG 38.3.

(1) Forenoon

(a) TG 38.2

(1) At 0600 BUNKER HILL in Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 128°-14'E, launched a search of sectors 015°-055°(T) and 325°-335°(T) to a radius of 300 miles. Ten VF and five VB were employed, teams of two VF and one VB searching each ten degree sector. The search, which was recovered at 1036, was negative. One VF was lost, but the pilot was recovered two days later (October 18th) by the submarine SAURY. This search destroyed two Japanese twin-engine land-bombers en route.\*\*\*\*

(2) At 0700 HANCOCK in Latitude 22°-07'N, Longitude 127°-54'E, launched a search of sector 335°-005°(T) to a distance of 225 miles. Four VF were employed, two VF searching each fifteen degrees. The search, which was recovered at 1035, was negative.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 161104, October 1944 to CTG 38.1.

\*\* War Diary CHESTER, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary SALT LAKE CITY, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 8, forwarded by BUNKER HILL, Serial 0304, October 30th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report HANCOCK period October 6th-31st, 1944, Serial 0100, November 3rd, 1944.



## (b) TG 38.3

(1) At 0600 ESSEX launched a search similar to that conducted by the BUNKER HILL, but this search covered the sector 245°-295°(T). The search, which was recovered at 1036, was negative.\*

## (2) Afternoon:

## (a) TG 38.2

(1) At 1225 BUNKER HILL in Latitude 22°-37'N, Longitude 127°-45'E, launched a search\*\* similar to the morning search made by the BUNKER HILL and HANCOCK planes and covering the same sectors. This search destroyed seven enemy planes en route. At 1425 in Latitude 26°-37'N, Longitude 130°-28'E, this search contacted a Japanese force which it reported as two battleships (BB) of the KONGO Class; one light cruiser (CL) of the NATORI Class and four destroyers (DD). The battleships were refueling the destroyers astern on course 240°(T). As has been pointed out previously, this report was incorrect, in that the ships reported as battleships were actually heavy cruisers.

It is not clear why the American pilots, both land and carrier based, were constantly reporting battleships in the area when none were present, but it is assumed that the pilots had perhaps been over-briefed. A few minutes after making the first contact the search planes observed three additional destroyers about twenty miles farther west on course 030°(T).

It is of interest that the above contact reports made by the BUNKER HILL search plane were, excepting for the error of identification (battleships for cruisers), very accurate indeed! These ships comprised the Japanese SECOND Striking Force whose departure, at 0730, October 15th from the Empire and its composition (although somewhat incorrect) had been reported by the BESUGO. It was composed of CRUDIV TWO (two heavy cruisers, NACHI, ASHIGARA) and DESRON ONE (one light cruiser, ABUKUMA and seven destroyers, the SHIRANUHI and KASUMI of DESDIV EIGHTEEN, the AKEBONO and USHIO of DESDIV SEVEN and the WAKABA, HATSUSHIMO and HATSU HARU of DESDIV TWENTY-ONE).

As has been pointed out previously under COMTHIRDFLT, this contact report was so seriously garbled in transmission that about one hour and thirty-five minutes were lost in endeavoring to clarify it. This delay

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\* Action Report CTG 38.3 Battle of Formosa, Serial 0091, December 8th, 1944, page 8.

\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 8, Forwarded by BUNKER HILL, Serial 0304, October 30th, 1944.



saved the SECOND Striking Force from heavy damage by carrier-based air attack because by the time the clarification had been made, it was too late to launch such attacks.

(b) TG 38.3

(1) At 1233 ESSEX in Latitude 22°-42'N, Longitude 127°-26'E, launched a search similar to the morning search employing the same number of planes and covering the same sectors. The ESSEX launched at the same time a high speed search of four VF of the same sectors but to a radius of 200 miles. Both searches, which were recovered at 1643, were negative. Two enemy planes were destroyed during its search operations.\*

(3) Night

At 2147 the INDEPENDENCE launched a night search of seven VT(N) and two VF(N) to search the sectors 345°-015°(T) and 245°-255°(T) to a radius of 300 miles in order to locate the enemy force which had been reported there earlier. No contacts had been made by 2400.\*\* This night search was unusual and appears to have been the first night search of any consequence made against the enemy by American carrier-based planes in the Western Pacific.

It is to be observed that the pilots on search reported having destroyed a total of eleven enemy planes during the progress of their searches. A study of certain of the aircraft action reports relating to the search shows that some of the search teams had chased enemy planes which were on courses at right angles to the searching course. In these chases, which were not always successful, these search teams had been forced to operate at full throttle for some time, and had reached speeds of 250 knots.\* Because it took the search teams away from their proper position on the search arc, this action may have adversely affected the efficiency of the search.

While it cannot be flatly stated that such action was incorrect for the data is not conclusive, nevertheless it can be pointed out that the objective of pilots on search is usually specifically designated to them.\*\*\* In the above searches the assigned objective was the discovering of enemy surface forces which were in position to attack portions of the THIRD Fleet, and notably TG 30.3. With such an objective, does it

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\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 15 forwarded by Commander Air Group 15 Serial 024, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.2, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* USF 73 Tactical and Operational Instructions Carrier Aircraft, 1948, paragraph 307, also USF 74B Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine U.S. Fleet Aircraft 1944, paragraph 2133.



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not seem correct that the TF 38 search teams should normally not have permitted themselves to be diverted from their basic objective?

Throughout the day TG 38.2 maintained a CAP of twelve VF and a SNASP of four VF - four VB. The CAP shot down four enemy aircraft. An additional CAP of eight VF(N) was launched at 1802 to cover the task groups during the hours of dusk and early darkness. This CAP was recovered at 2244.

Meanwhile, TG 38.3, which was operating nearby, maintained a CAP of about eight VF with a SNASP of four VF - four VT. This CAP shot down three enemy aircraft. Each of the above task groups provided, in addition, fighter cover for TG 30.3 of eight VF during the late afternoon.

Pending return of search planes sometime after midnight the task groups remained in the same general area.

(e) Operations of CTG 38.4 on October 16th.

CTG 38.4 continued on various southeasterly courses, speed eighteen knots until 0552 when he rendezvoused with the fueling group (TU 30.8.5) (CALIENTE, LACKAWANNA, KASKASKIA and escorts CAPPS and HILBERT) in the vicinity of Latitude 16°-30'N, Longitude 127°-00'E. At 0605 fueling was commenced.\*

Weather conditions showed a cloudy, about 8/10 overcast sky, with a prevailing wind averaging about eighteen knots from the northeast. The ceiling was unlimited, the visibility about fifteen miles, the sea slight with a slight swell.\*\*

At 0730 the escort carrier SITKOH BAY with its escort also rendezvoused with CTG 38.4.

The SITKOH BAY transferred eighteen VF and four VT to the four carriers of the task group.\*\*\* Of these planes the SAN JACINTO received five VF and one VT; the BELLEAU WOOD four VF, one VT; the FRANKLIN eight VF, one VT; and the ENTERPRISE one VF, one VT.\*\*\*\* The SITKOH BAY also transferred seventeen pilots and fourteen aircrewmembers to the four carriers,\*\*\* but no information is available as to their distribution.

The replacement planes were in poor condition, requiring extensive repairs. Likewise, the state of the carrier training of the replacement

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\* War Diary KASKASKIA, October 16th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon, October 7th-21st, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary SITKOH BAY, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report carriers concerned.

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pilots, owing to the fact that they had done little or no carrier landing practice while on the replenishment carrier, was very poor.\* This was an unhappy situation and one which should have been avoided, since the receipt of such poor planes and pilots as replacements must necessarily have had an adverse effect on the immediate combat efficiency of the various carrier air groups to which they were assigned. Also, it should be clear that poor replacements may have a limiting effect on the Commander's decisions.

During the day, an average CAP of twelve VF and an average SNASP of four VF--four VB was maintained. No contacts were made.

One SAN JACINTO VT and one FRANKLIN VB were jettisoned. The McCOLL which had suffered a breakdown was temporarily transferred to TU 30.8.5.\*\*

At 1828 CTG 38.4 headed on course 235°(T) speed twenty-two knots towards the dawn launching position for strikes against Luzon.\*

This was in accordance with orders received somewhat earlier in the day from COMTHIRDFLT which directed him, among other things, to proceed immediately to a strike position off central Luzon; to attack that area commencing at dawn, October 17th; and to maintain reconnaissance of the western approaches to San Bernardino Straits.\*\*\*

(6) Operations on October 17th until 0719.

(a) Operations of COMTHIRDFLT.

At 0007 COMTHIRDFLT informed CTG 38.1 that he intended to close that group's 0500 position after landing the night search at about 0230. He directed CTG 38.1, in part, to advise him immediately of the sectors he expected to search at dawn.\*\*\*\*

At about 0200 he received a dispatch from CINCPOA reporting that the SKATE had contacted at 2030 the previous evening in Latitude 28°-01'N, Longitude 130°-45'E (East of Amami O Shima) three large ships, one destroyer, two destroyer escorts on course 010°(T), speed eighteen knots.\*\*\*\*\* It is likely that he had already intercepted this dispatch on the ship to shore circuit some hours before.

COMTHIRDFLT, who had been keeping a running estimate of the situation, now realized that perhaps there wasn't going to be any fleet action after all. His afternoon search of the previous day had reported only light surface forces within range of TG 30.3. Neither the surface forces

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\* Action Report FRANKLIN, Operations against the enemy at Nansai Shoto, Formosa and the Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0039, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* War Diary McCOLL, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 160246, October 1944.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 161507, October 1944 to CTG 38.1.

\*\*\*\*\* CINCPOA Dispatch 161635, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.



reported by China-based planes as being in the Takao area of Formosa or at sea in the South China Sea on October 15th, nor other surface forces, had been reported by TF 17 submarines either in Luzon Strait or rounding the northern end of Formosa. It seemed clear, therefore, that none of these forces were deploying for fleet action at this time. In addition, TF 17 submarines had not reported any movement of large forces from the Empire. This fact, when considered with other evidence, seemed to support the view that only limited surface forces, and these without carriers, had as yet left the Empire. Finally, the SKATE report, which obviously referred to the surface units his afternoon search had discovered, showed that even this force was retiring. This retirement conception was supported by the night search of 300 miles made by the INDEPENDENCE planes, which search had failed to make any contacts whatsoever. COMTHIRDFLT appears to have received nothing from CINCPQA concerning the movement or projected movement of enemy surface forces. Why, then, did they retire? COMTHIRDFLT felt that the answer was obvious - that the THIRD Fleet had been discovered, which was correct. The THIRD Fleet had been sighted by air search on the 16th, and therefore the surface forces which had been observed by the BUNKER HILL aircraft and by the SHARK (Japanese SECOND Striking Force)\* had been directed to retire by the Japanese High Command.\*\* On the other hand, concerning own forces, he realized that at daybreak that day, CTF 77's advance forces would appear off Leyte to prepare the way for the landing on the 20th.

He was fully aware of the fact that, in endeavoring to save the CANBERRA and HOUSTON, and in preparing for fleet action on October 15th and 16th, he had been unable to complete fully his assigned objective with relation to the Philippine Islands. He therefore decided that KING II should now have priority over all other considerations.

This decision to forego TF 38's operations looking towards fleet action and to return that task force to the objective assigned it, in his basic plan for this phase of KING II, notably the destruction of enemy aircraft and air installations on Luzon and in the Visayas, is considered sound.\*\*\* Certainly the enemy forces so far reported were unimportant and could not in any way be considered as a major portion of the enemy fleet. Therefore, COMTHIRDFLT was required by his orders from CINCPQA to return to the other tasks of the basic plan.

At 0719, October 17th, COMTHIRDFLT was preparing new directives for CTF 38 in accordance with the above decision.

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\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 161226 to CinC FIFTH Fleet, War Diary DESRON ONE, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC 161638, NA 11739.

\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 161226, October 1944, War Diary DESRON ONE October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Operation Order 21-44, Dispatch 031600, October, 1944.



(b) Operations of CTG 30.3 until 0719 October 17th.

CTG 30.3 continued his retirement toward Ulithi.

From 0600 until 0719 he maintained a CAP of eight VF and a SNASP of four VF - four VT.\*

At 0719 TG 30.3 was bearing  $112^{\circ}$ (T), distant 300 miles from Garan Bi, Formosa.

(c) Operations of CTG 38.1 until 0719, October 17th.

CTG 38.1 continued on course  $240^{\circ}$ (T), speed 18.5 knots towards his dawn launching position, in Latitude  $21^{\circ}$ -00'N, Longitude  $127^{\circ}$ -00'E.\*\*

Weather conditions were as follows: Visibility good with scattered middle and low clouds; light and infrequent showers; wind fresh from the northeast; flying conditions mostly average.\*\*\*

At 0558 CTG 38.1 launched eighteen VF from the WASP to search the sector  $260^{\circ}$ - $360^{\circ}$ (T)\*\* to a radius of about 300 miles from enemy surface units. At the same time he launched a CAP of twelve VF, also from the WASP.\*\*\*

At 0719 TG 38.1 was bearing  $005^{\circ}$ (T) distance 620 miles from Suluan Island.

(d) Operations of CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 until 0719, October 17th.

CTG's 38.2 and 38.3 operated in the vicinity of Latitude  $22^{\circ}$ -00'N, Longitude  $128^{\circ}$ -00'E until the INDEPENDENCE had recovered her night search planes, which was accomplished between 0059 and 0221. The search was negative.\*\*\*\*

After the recovery of the search planes, these two task groups moved to the southwestward some forty-five miles and then operated in the

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\* Action Report COWPENS, Report of Actions 1400, October 15th - 2230, October 17th, 1944, Serial 0027, October 17th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report WASP, Operations against Okinawa Jima, Miyako Jima, Northern Luzon, Formosa, Manila Bay Area, Leyte and Enemy Naval Units Western Visayas, October 2nd-27th, 1944, Serial 0040, October 28th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report INDEPENDENCE, October 1944, Serial 0017, November 2nd, 1944.



vicinity of the new reference point (Latitude 21°-25'N, Longitude 127°-25'E) assigned but a short time before by CTF 38.\*

At 0558 CTG 38.2 launched eight VF and four VB from the BUNKER HILL to search sector 315°-355°(T), to a radius of 260 miles with the objective of locating enemy forces. Up to 0719 no contacts had been made by the search planes. Flying conditions were good.\*\*

Also at about 0558, CTG 38.3 launched eight VF and four VB from the ESSEX to search sector 355°-035°(T), to a radius of 260 miles, also with objective of locating enemy surface forces. Up to 0719 no contacts had been made by the search planes.\*

During the period between dawn and 0719, CTG 38.2 was covered with a CAP of twelve VF and a SNASP of four VF - four VB,\*\*\* and CTG 38.3 was covered with a CAP of eight VF and a SNASP of eight VF - four VB/VT.\*

At 0719 TG's 38.2 and 38.3 were bearing 006°(T) distant 640 miles from Suluan Island.

(e) Operations of CTG 38.4 until 0719, October 17th.

CTG 38.4 arrived at his dawn launching position and at 0440 he launched four VF(N) from the FRANKLIN to heckle Legaspi Airfield.\*\*\*\*

Weather conditions were poor over the target (broken clouds with a ceiling of about 2000 feet). Below the clouds the visibility was poor due to haze, mist and rain.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0550 he launched a fighter sweep of twenty VF to gain command of the air over Clark Field.\*\*\*\*

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- \* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 17th, 1944.
  - \*\* Action Report BUNKER HILL, October 7th-26th, 1944, Serial 0293, October 27th, 1944, Part II, page 9.
  - \*\*\* Action Report HANCOCK, October 6th-31st, 1944, Serial 0100, November 3rd, 1944, Enclosure (A), Annex X.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 17th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report FRANKLIN, Operations against the enemy at Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0039, October 31st, 1944.

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At 0557 he launched two VT to reconnoiter San Bernardino Strait.\*

At 0616 he launched Strike ABLE to strike Clark and Mabalacat Airfields.\*\*

At 0700 he launched Strike BAKER to strike Legaspi Airfield.\*\*

In the above strikes planes were launched on combat missions as follows:\*\*\*

				<u>Total</u>
(a) Fighter Sweeps	20 VF	4 VF(N)		24
(b) Strike ABLE	16 VF	19 VB	15 VT	50
(c) Strike BAKER	16 VF	20 VB	16 VT	<u>52</u>
	Total sorties			126

During the period from dawn until 0719, CTG 38.4 maintained a CAP of twelve VF and a SNASP of four VF - four VT over the task group.

At 0719 TG 38.4 was bearing 348°(T) distant 270 miles from Suluan Island.

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\* Action Report SAN JACINTO Operations Against Okinawa Jima, Formosa, Luzon and Visayas, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0043, October 31st, 1944.

\*\* Action Report ENTERPRISE Operations Against the Enemy at Nansai Shoto, Formosa, Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st 1944, Serial 0053, October 31st 1944; also Aircraft Action Report Air Group 13, October 17th 1944, forwarded by FRANKLIN, Serial 077, November 6th 1944.

\*\*\* Action Reports FRANKLIN and ENTERPRISE; also Aircraft Action Report Air Group 13, October 17th, 1944.

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(b) Submarine Force Pacific Fleet

(1) Background of Submarine Operations

During Operation KING II the POA submarines were generally concerned with one or more of three principal objectives. These objectives were:

(a) The protection of Allied operations by intercepting, reporting and destroying enemy forces approaching the area of operations or retiring therefrom.

(b) The reduction of enemy naval strength by the destruction of enemy merchant and naval shipping.

(c) The maintenance of morale and aviation efficiency by providing lifeguard submarines to recover downed flyers.\*

There were, of course, occasions when each of these objectives had priority over the other two, and therefore the above listing is not necessarily in order of importance. However, fundamentally, objective (b) was the basic objective of the POA submarines, and was the one on which they were generally embarked.

These three objectives flowed out of some of the tasks assigned COMSUBPAC early in 1943 by CINCPAC, which tasks were:

(a) To inflict maximum damage to enemy ships and shipping by offensive patrol at focal points.

(b) To plant offensive minefields in suitable enemy waters, to destroy enemy ships and to force the enemy to adopt countermeasures.

(c) To accomplish other tasks as may be required from time to time by the strategic or tactical situations, or based on intelligence which may come to hand. Such special tasks include supporting naval or land forces by attacks on shipping in threatened areas; reconnaissance; transport of troops for raids on enemy bases or installations; landing of agents for intelligence purposes in enemy held territory; evacuation of armed forces or civilians from enemy held territory; delivery of supplies to armed United States or Allied Forces; or to agents in enemy held territory, as may be necessary or desirable.\*\*

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\* CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 00851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 17, Operation Plan 1-43, Serial 0807, June 24th, 1943.

They also flowed from COMSUBPAC's Operation Orders to each of the submarines engaged in KING II.\*

In addition to the above specific tasks, COMSUBPAC received extra tasks from CINCPAC from time to time. These tasks were often given by telephone as the two headquarters were nearby, or were given orally at the flag officers' conferences which were held each morning at CINCPAC's headquarters. Requests by fleet and force commanders for the services of submarines for special missions were always made to CINCPAC, and in all cases, it was CINCPAC and not COMSUBPAC who made the decision.\*\*

For the convenience of the POA submarines operating in the Western Pacific Ocean, that ocean was divided into five principal operating areas.\*\*\* These were: (Plate VII)

(a) POLAR CIRCUIT - Five water areas adjacent to the eastern shores of Sakhalin Islands.

(b) HIT PARADE - Ten Empire water areas adjacent to the eastern shores of the principal Japanese islands, notably Kyushu, Shikoku and Honshu.

(c) DUNKERS DERBY - Six water areas in the vicinity of and embracing the Bonin Islands.

(d) MARU MORGUE - Six water areas in the vicinity of and embracing the Nansei Shoto.

(e) CONVOY COLLEGE - Five water areas embracing Luzon Strait and extending to Hainan Island. For KING II, COMSUBPAC was authorized to operate as far south as 18°-30'N. This was done so that the entire Strait might be patrolled by one command, and so that the wolf packs might more effectively attack enemy shipping.\*\*\*\*

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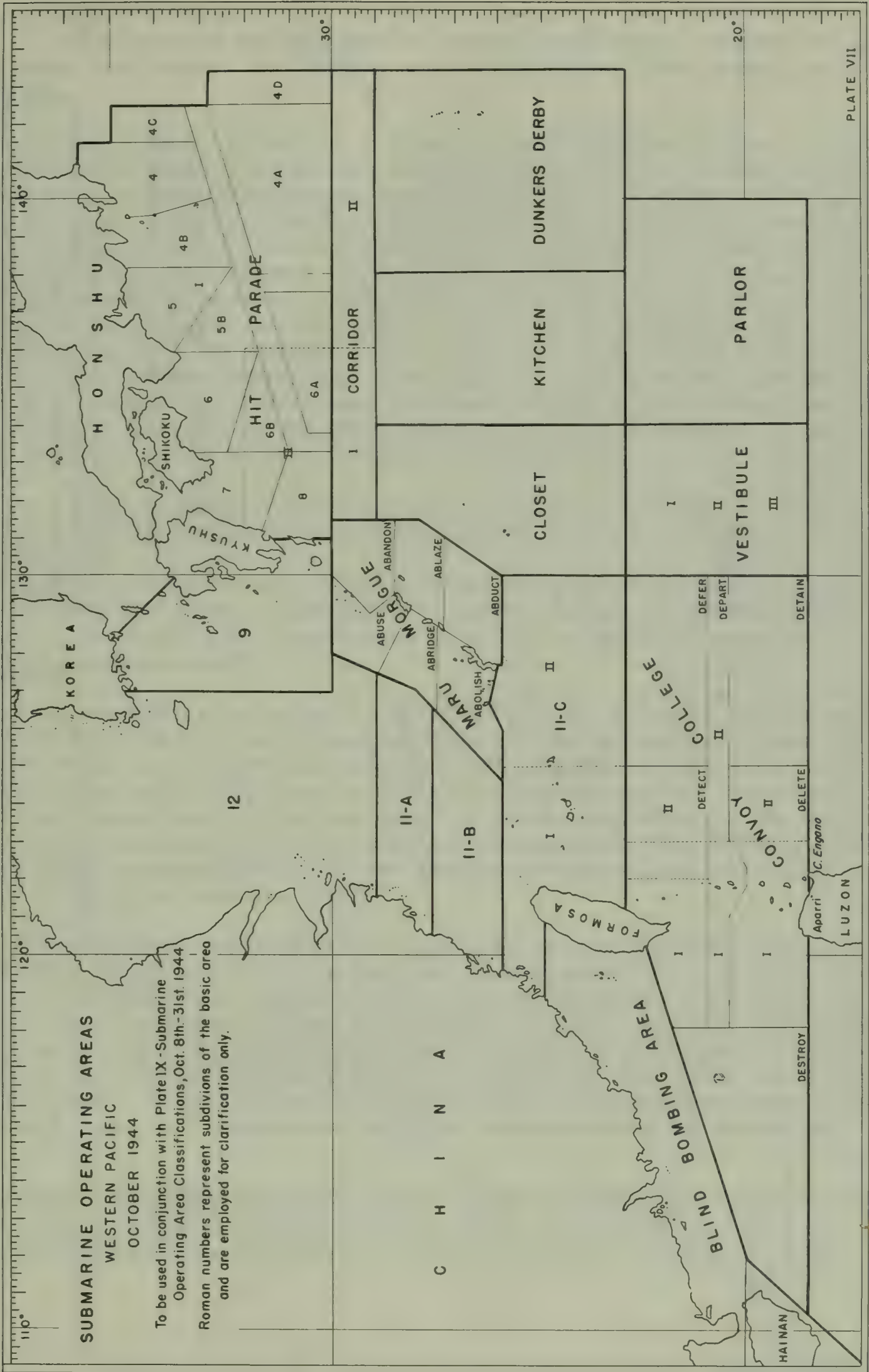
\* Most of these Operation Orders are not available to this study, but from those available - notably SEAHORSE, SEGUNDO, WHALE, SNAPPER, SNOOK, POMFRET, COBIA, SKATE, PARCHE, APOGON, TAMBOR, SEA FOX, SEAL, SARGO, RAZORBACK, PIRANHA, SEA DEVIL, GUARDFISH, GREENLING, TREPANG, STERLET, TANG, SAILFISH, BESUGO, GABILAN, RONQUIL and POGY - the above conclusion was drawn.

\*\* History of the United States Naval Administration in World War II, Submarine Commands - forwarded to the Director of Naval History, by Commander Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet, Serial 0016, February 14th, 1946.

\*\*\* Submarine Operational History World War II, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, pages 56-89.

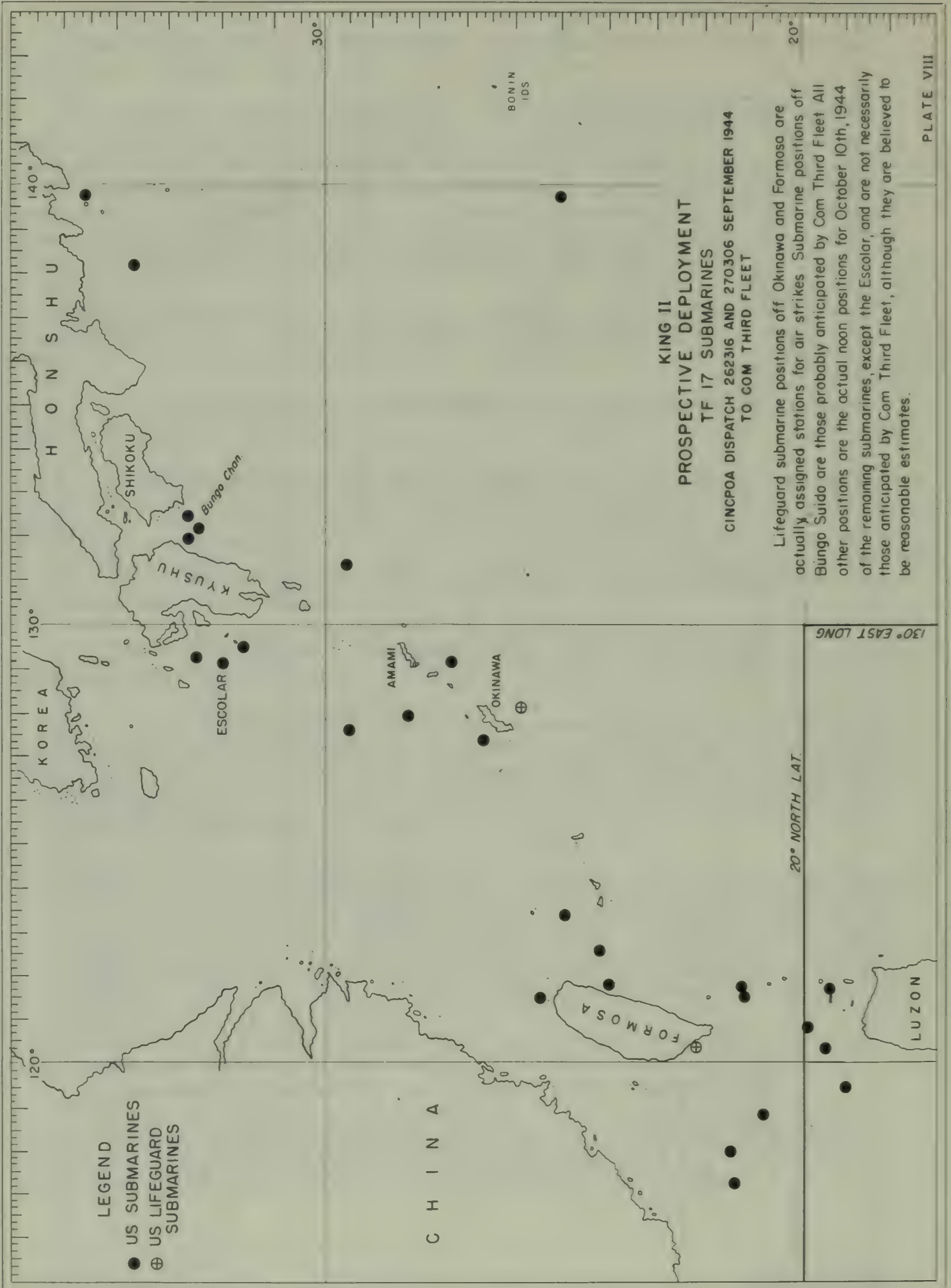
\*\*\*\* CINCPAC, Dispatch 272014, October 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT.





**SUBMARINE OPERATING AREAS**  
**WESTERN PACIFIC**  
**OCTOBER 1944**

To be used in conjunction with Plate IX - Submarine  
 Operating Area Classifications, Oct. 8th - 31st, 1944  
 Roman numbers represent subdivisions of the basic area  
 and are employed for clarification only.





(f) Area to the eastward of Luzon. This area, although for a time under the control of CINCPAC, will be discussed under Submarines, SOWESPAC.

For the KING II Operation, CINCPAC advised COMTHIRDFLT that on October 10th (D-10) SUBPAC submarines would be on station as follows - (a) three packs of three submarines each, plus SAILFISH in CONVOY COLLEGE, SAILFISH to be used as lifeguard off southern tip Formosa; (b) one pack of three submarines off the northeast coast of Formosa; (c) one pack of three submarines off Bungo Suido in the HIT PARADE, and two submarines in the southern approaches to Tokyo Bay, also in the HIT PARADE; (d) six submarines in the MARU MORGUE, one of which was to be employed as a lifeguard submarine at Okinawa - the other five to be placed in intercepting positions to catch ships attempting to escape TF 38's air strikes; (e) one submarine off the Formosa northwest coast; (f) one submarine in DUNKERS DERBY patrolling the Bonin Islands; (g) two submarines in the POLAR CIRCUIT patrolling the Kuriles.\* (Plate VIII)

In addition to the above, one pack of three submarines was assigned to the southern approaches to Nagasaki-Sasebo.\*\*

CINCPAC stated that the above submarine dispositions were designed both to meet the needs of COMTHIRDFLT, and to operate TF 17 submarines in waters where profitable targets were expected, as well as to avoid probable mined areas.\*

This was not satisfactory to COMTHIRDFLT, who informed CINCPAC by dispatch that the proposed submarine dispositions appeared to leave gaps through which enemy fleet units could reach favorable positions at sea without being adequately reported. He also stated that he thought that the Yokosuka and Sasebo stations were too close under enemy shore-based air to guarantee sighting and trailing, and suggested that CINCPAC adopt his original recommendations as the locations therein proposed would better bolster air searches.\*\*\*

These original recommendations referred to by COMTHIRDFLT had been submitted by him to CINCPAC by dispatch on September 23rd. In this dispatch, COMTHIRDFLT had recommended that a reconnaissance line employing a "ZOO" be established by dawn October 8th, along a line with its center in Latitude 27°-45'N, Longitude 124°-00'E, with its major axis 090°(T)-270°(T), and with the distance between submarines fifty miles. A "ZOO" was three wolf packs of three submarines each, all operating under a ZOO commander. He also recommended that the maximum number of submarines

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\* CINCPAC, Dispatch 262316, September 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\* CINCPAC, Dispatch 270306, September 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT, Dispatch 272215, September 1944, to CINCPAC.



practicable be assigned HIT PARADE and MARU MORGUE in October and November.\*

CINCPOA on September 29th, rejected the above recommendations of COMTHIRDFLT, stating that he appreciated COMTHIRDFLT's point of view, but that he (CINCPOA) believed that his own dispositions would most effectively support COMTHIRDFLT's operations by giving the submarines the best chance to intercept and inflict damage on the enemy.\*\*

Thus it is clear that there was a considerable divergence of opinion between CINCPOA and COMTHIRDFLT concerning the employment of TF 17 submarines in the KING II Operation.

CINCPOA, on the one hand, was endeavoring to accomplish two objectives at the same time. These objectives were: (1) "the interception, reporting, and destruction of enemy forces approaching the area of operations, or retiring therefrom,"\*\*\* and (2) "the destruction of enemy naval forces and merchant shipping."\*\*\* He believed the enemy carriers were in the Empire.\*\*\*\* Whether he felt reasonably satisfied, as did COMSOPESPAC, that this carrier force would not sortie from the Empire, or whether he felt that his dispositions were sufficiently dense to insure the discovery of such a sortie is not clear. However, it is clear that he felt that COMTHIRDFLT's demands were excessive, and that under his own (CINCPOA's) disposition, COMTHIRDFLT should be able to operate with perfect freedom of action, and with minimum interference, and therefore the submarines should not be unnecessarily diverted from their continuing destruction objectives. For this reason he desired to place strong submarine forces in those areas where enemy shipping presented the best targets. From the fact that he proposed to station nine submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE, it is clear that he considered that this area was perhaps the most important of all of the submarine areas.

COMTHIRDFLT, on the other hand, considered that his operations should have priority and that the submarines should be assigned, as their basic objective, offensive reconnaissance in support of his operations. He also believed that they should be so positioned as to insure that this would be effectively accomplished. It was for this reason that he wished CINCPOA to assign the maximum number of submarines practicable to HIT PARADE and MARU MORGUE, where they might insure that he was not surprised by enemy forces; it was also for this reason that he desired the ZOO across the east China Sea, and, as will be shown later, it was for this reason that the CONVOY COLLEGE area was omitted in his representations to CINCPOA.

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\* COMTHIRDFLT, Dispatch 230643, September 1944, to CINCPOA.

\*\* CINCPOA, Dispatch 290221, October 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\* CINCPOA-CINCPOA Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 00851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CINCPOA, Dispatch 060202, October 1944, to COMSEVENTHFLT.



It would appear that COMTHIRDFLT, rather than CINCPAA, was the more correct in his contentions as to the employment of the submarines, for CINCPAA's submarine operations against shipping were of a continuing nature, and while they contributed greatly to ultimate victory, it does not appear that they were so vital at this time as to require equality with the offensive reconnaissance desired by COMTHIRDFLT. It must be remembered, in this connection, that COMTHIRDFLT had been given a directive from CINCPAA which stated that "In case opportunity for destruction of a major portion of the enemy fleet offer or can be created, such destruction becomes the primary task of all Pacific Ocean Forces."\* Is it not agreed that the only way in which he could discover whether or not his operations were creating such a situation was through the prompt receipt of intelligence?

In view of the inability of Allied land-based planes to search the vital Empire areas, COMTHIRDFLT necessarily envisaged this information as being obtained primarily by submarine reconnaissance.

COMTHIRDFLT appeared to have accepted CINCPAA's decision as final, for in his Operation Order 21-44 issued on October 3rd, he stated in the information paragraph, "Submarines of TF 17 and SEVENTH Fleet are supporting this operation by furnishing early information enemy movements, lifeguard service and attacks on enemy shipping."\*\* However, this apparent acceptance was not so in fact, for, on October 5th, he reopened the discussion. He did this because on October 4th, CINCPAA had issued his Zone Notice #35\*\*\* wherein he reclassified temporarily submarine areas, by designating area classifications from day to day based on COMTHIRDFLT's proposed movements as promulgated in his October 4th dispatch\*\*\*\* to CINCPAA and COMSEVENTHFLT.

These temporary area classifications designated as air-surface zones, only those areas where COMTHIRDFLT was expected to operate by plan, and immediately redesignated them as submarine patrol zones when by plan he was expected to be clear of the area.

For definition:

(a) An Air-Surface Zone was a zone wherein both aircraft and surface ships could attack any submarine encountered without inquiry as

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\* CINCPAC-CINCPAA Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.

\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Operation Order 21-44 Dispatch 031600, October 1944.

\*\*\* CINCPAA Dispatch 050310, October 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 040250, October 1944, to CINCPAA and COMSEVENTHFLT.



to its enemy character. American submarines were not permitted to enter an air-surface zone.\*

(b) A Submarine Patrol Zone was a zone wherein aircraft were directed not to attack a surface ship (except in an enemy held harbor), unless the visibility was such that the target could be identified beyond possibility of doubt as not a submarine.\*\*

(c) A Joint Zone was a zone in which surface, air and sub-surface craft could operate simultaneously. In joint zones, aircraft were directed not to attack a submarine. They were directed not to attack a surface ship (except in an enemy held harbor), unless the visibility was such that the target could be identified as enemy beyond possibility of doubt. Surface ships were directed to make every effort to establish the identity of any submarine encountered before attacking it. Likewise, submarines were directed not to attack surface ships encountered unless enemy identity was established beyond a possibility of doubt.\*\*\*

(d) A Blind Bombing Zone was a zone in which aircraft could attack any target encountered without inquiry as to its enemy character, except in a moving Haven established by a Submarine Notice, or in an area of surface ship operations about which they had been notified.\*\*\*

COMTHIRDFLT, in reopening the discussion, informed CINCPAC by dispatch\*\*\*\* that he considered "restricting (his) operations by any exact timing of change of area classification was a definite source of danger, as weather and/or tactical situations may, as in the past, require sudden and unannounced shift in track or timing." He stated that "submarines must be operated as not to interfere with TF 38, when operating offensively," and further stated that he "would prefer, except for life-guards and close-in patrols of Surigao and San Bernardino Straits, to see them kept north of 25°-00'N and west of 121°-00'E during the period October 8th to 15th."

Finally, and, as a new subject, he stated that if the "friendly typhoon" which was raging at the time should create a golden opportunity for striking the Kyushu area, he had an alternate plan for striking that area in lieu of Okinawa.\*\*\*\*

CINCPAC, without referring to the above dispatch, nevertheless appears to have considered that the recommendations contained therein

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\* Submarine Operational History, World War II, prepared by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 79.

\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 060300, October 1944, to COMNAVGRPCINA, COMTHIRDFLT, CTF 17.



\*\*\* Submarine Operational History, World War II, prepared by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 79; also CINCPAC Standard Operating Procedure SOP-1, Serial SOP-1, September 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 060712, October 1944 to CINCPAC.



**SUBMARINE OPERATING AREA CLASSIFICATIONS  
WESTERN PACIFIC**

OCTOBER 8 th. - 31 st. inc. 1944  
CINCPOA ZONE NOTICES 35,38,40,42,44,45,47

All areas submarine patrol zones unless otherwise indicated  
Dotted areas indicate air surface zone.   
Hatched areas indicate joint zone. 

OCTOBER	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<b>MARU MORGUE</b>																								
ABANDON																								
ABDUCT																								
ABLAZE																								
ABOLISH																								
ABRIDGE																								
ABUSE																								
☆ COKE																								
CORRIDOR																								
<i>W of 136° E I</i>																								
<i>E of 136° E II</i>																								
CLOSET																								
<b>CONVOY COLLEGE</b>																								
DEFER																								
DELETE																								
<i>W of 123° E I</i>																								
<i>E of 123° E II</i>																								
DEPART																								
<i>W of 123° E I</i>																								
<i>E of 123° E II</i>																								
DESTROY																								
DETAIN																								
☆☆ DETECT																								
<b>DUNKERS DERBY</b>																								
HIT PARADE																								
I																								
<i>W of 136° E II</i>																								
<i>S of 32° N</i>																								
KITCHEN																								
PARLOR																								
I																								
☆☆☆ VESTIBULE																								
II																								
III																								
9																								
11-A																								
11-B																								
11-C																								
<i>W of 125° E I</i>																								
<i>E of 125° E II</i>																								
12																								

☆ COKE is a fueling area. (Lat. 19°N, Long. 139°E) Not shown on Plate VII.

☆☆ Until 0001 October 16th. DETECT divided at 122°E. After that date divided at 123°E.

☆☆☆ Until 0001 October 16th. VESTIBULE divided at 21°N. After that date Lane (II) established between 20°-30'N. and 21°N.





were, in general, valid, for on October 7th he issued his Zone Notice #38 which modified his Zone Notice #35. Zone Notice #38, instead of operating on a day to day basis based on COMTHIRDFLT's planned movements as did Zone Notice #35, operated over a broader period of time. It extended the air surface zones from the completion dates shown on Plate IX to a new completion date of 2400, October 16th. CINCPAA stated this as follows: "All areas listed in Notice #35 will retain these temporary classifications through October 16th" and further stated, "all areas listed in this notice and in Notice #35 revert to submarine patrol zones at 0000, October 17th unless otherwise subsequently directed."\*

These changes were a considerable relief to COMTHIRDFLT as he had obviously been concerned lest he be forced to operate in waters where he was liable to submarine attack from friendly forces, and where friendly submarines were liable to attack from TF 38 ships and planes.

CINCPAA also stated, in the same dispatch, that between October 9th through October 16th, (a) that part of the HIT PARADE lying south of 32°-00'N and west of 136°-00'E, (b) the corridor west of 136°-00'E, and (c) areas ABDUCT, ABLAZE and ABANDON of MARU MORGUE, would be Joint Zones.\*

Since these areas had been previously designated as submarine patrol zones, COMTHIRDFLT must have considered this change as favorable, as it clearly increased his freedom of action in the waters southeast of Kyushu.

The above submarine area designations remained in force during the operations of the THIRD Fleet from October 8th until October 14th. On this latter date, in his Submarine Zone Notice #39, he advised both COMTHIRDFLT and COMSUBPAC (CTF 17) that the restrictions promulgated for the SOWESPAC area were (a) beginning at 2000, October 15th, the area between PASTURE, BRIAR PATCH, FISH POND and the Philippines would be an air surface zone, and (b) commencing at 0001, October 18th, the area between PASTURE, BRIAR PATCH and the Philippines which lies north of Latitude 14°-00'N, would be a joint zone.\*\*

Likewise on October 14th, in his Submarine Zone Notice #40, CINCPAA directed that those portions of HIT PARADE and CORRIDOR which were joint zones would revert to submarine patrol zones at 2000 that date. He also extended until further notice the air surface designation of the DETAIL section of CONVOY COLLEGE.\*\*\*

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\* CINCPAA Dispatch 070316, October 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\* CINCPAA Dispatch 132225, October 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT and COMSUBPAC.

\*\*\* CINCPAA Dispatch 140432, October 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT.



On the following day (October 15th), presumably because of the possibility of fleet action, as reported by COMTHIRDFLT,\* he made two important submarine decisions. These were:

- (a) To reclassify the submarine operating areas.
- (b) To reassign the submarines.

He reclassified the submarine areas by his Zone Notice #42, effective at 0001, October 16th, as follows:\*\*

(a) Air Surface Zones - KITCHEN, CLOSET, VESTIBULE, area 11-C east of a line from Latitude 23°-00'N, Longitude 123°-00'E, to 26°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E, DEFER, DETAIN and that part of DETECT and DELETE lying east of Longitude 123°-00'E.

(b) Joint Zones - ABANDON, ABLAZE, ABDUCT, PARLOR; a lane through VESTIBULE fifteen miles either side of a line along Latitude 20°-45'N, and DEPART east of Longitude 123°-00'E.

(c) Submarine Patrol Zones - DUNKERS DERBY and all areas north and west of those described in (a) and (b).

He reassigned his submarines by dispatch, and advised COMTHIRDFLT of his new submarine dispositions. He stated, in part, as follows:\*\*\*

(a) That ten submarines (SNOOK, COBIA, SHARK, BLACKFISH, SEADRAGON, ICEFISH, SAWFISH, PARCHE, DRUM, SAILFISH), were blocking Luzon Strait between Longitudes 119°-00'E and 121°-00'E.

(b) One submarine (TANG) was off northwest tip of Formosa.

(c) Three submarines (SALMON, SILVERSIDES and TRIGGER) were disposed to the eastward of the northeast tip of Formosa.

(d) Two submarines (STERLET and BURRFISH) of the MARU MORGUE were watching Okinawa.

(e) One submarine was in each of ABANDON (BARBEL), ABLAZE (SKATE), ABUSE (SEA DOG), and ABDUCT (SAURY).

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150149, October 1944, to CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC.

\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 150450, October 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 150932, October 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT. The names of the submarines concerned were not listed in this dispatch, but have been included here for clarity.



(f) Three submarines (ESCOLAR, PERCH and CROAKER) were off southern approaches Nagasaki-Sasebo.

(g) Three submarines (BESUGO, GABILAN and RONQUIL) were guarding the Bungo Suido.

(h) Two submarines (TREPANG and SEA DEVIL) were guarding the southwest approaches to Tokyo Bay.

He stated also that one submarine (BLACKFIN) in position about Latitude 20°-45'N, Longitude 130°-00'E, was being ordered to retire eastward to 134°-30'E to clear COMTHIRDFLT's concentration point, and that two submarines (SEAHORSE and WHALE) in approximate position Latitude 20°-45'N, Longitude 125°-00'E, were retiring west to Longitude 122°-30'E, thence north to Latitude 24°-00'N, Longitude 123°-00'E.

This then was the background of the submarine operations until 0719, October 17th, undertaken by CTF 17 in support of KING II.

## (2) Operations of SUBPAC (TF 17) Submarines

The operations of the SUBPAC submarines connected with KING II will be discussed under the various groups, such as CONVOY COLLEGE, rather than by individual submarines. As the information concerning orders to the SUBPAC submarines throughout KING II is extremely meager, this analysis must necessarily comment more upon the dispositions from day to day than upon the orders received which resulted in the dispositions.\*

(a) CONVOY COLLEGE. As has been pointed out previously, CINCPAC advised COMTHIRDFLT that on October 10th there would be ten submarines on station in CONVOY COLLEGE. All submarines so designated were on station.\*\* These were the reduced coordinated attack groups (wolf packs) SNOOK and COBIA: SHARK (F), BLACKFISH and SEADRAGON; SAWFISH (F)

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\* Information available was obtained from COMSUBPAC; Commanding Officer, Submarine Base, New London, Conn.; Chief of Naval Personnel (for ships logs); Officer-in-Charge, Naval Records Management Centers, Alexandria, Va., and Mechanicsburg, Pa.; Director, Naval Records and History; Submarine Operational History World War II, Submarine Operations in World War II by Theodore Roscoe; and finally by the Patrol Reports of the various submarines. Out of all these sources, only limited and very sketchy information was obtainable concerning the operation plans and orders, and in many cases the dispatch orders had already been destroyed by burning. There were no War Diaries.

\*\* Ships Logs of Submarines concerned.



and ICEFISH; SEAHORSE (F) and WHALE. These groups were conducting the various rotating patrols of CONVOY COLLEGE as coordinated attack groups rather than as single submarines. The SAILFISH was engaged in lifeguard duties off southwest Formosa for the air strikes on Formosa made on October 12th, 13th, and 14th by TF 38, and on October 14th, 16th, and 17th by the B-29's of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command.\* The SAWFISH and ICEFISH were also on lifeguard duties off southwest Formosa, but were there primarily to support the above-mentioned B-29 strikes on the TWENTIETH Bomber Command, rather than those of TF 38. In fact, the ICEFISH was assigned a station about 100 miles southwest of Formosa commencing October 11th.\*\* The SEAHORSE was on lifeguard duty off Aparri, Luzon, between October 11th and October 14th, to cover the TF 38 air strikes on northern Luzon. Downed airmen were recovered as shown in Table 10.

The submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE were rotated through three areas either by dispatch or by temporary rotation plan. This was done to vary the intensity of action experienced by the submarines, to equalize their attack opportunities and to vary the intensity of enemy air coverage and other anti-submarine activities. The three areas were DESTROY, DETECT, and DELETE. Areas DEFER and DETAIN were generally waiting areas.\*\*\* The rotation was always clockwise, and was made on the 1st, 11th and 21st of each month.

Although the submarines in CONVOY COLLEGE, all of which were on offensive patrol,\*\*\*\* were disposed either by CTF 17, by the wolf pack commanders, or by the individual commanding officers, as the situation dictated, in what was considered to be the most productive section of that area against merchant shipping, the results were highly disappointing as enemy shipping appeared to avoid the Luzon Strait area at this time. (Plate X)

Although a number of contacts were made in the Strait (on October 9th, one tanker by SAWFISH; on October 10th, one transport with three

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\* War Patrol Report, SAILFISH, Report of TWELFTH War Patrol, Serial 057, December 11th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report, SAWFISH, Report of EIGHTH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944, and War Patrol Report, ICEFISH, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 011, November 13th, 1944.

\*\*\* Submarine Operational History, World War II, prepared by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 74.

\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 297-44, Serial 00801, September 3rd, 1944 to COBIA, SNOOK; CTF 17 Operation Order 327-44, Serial 00845, September 24th, 1944 to SAILFISH.









escorts by COBIA at 1216\* and by SAILFISH at 1605;\*\* on October 12th, one destroyer (or minelayer) by WHALE at 0835\*\*\* and by BLACKFISH at 2230;\*\*\*\* on October 16th, two small destroyers at 0805 and one net tender at 1001 by SAILFISH\*\* and a regaining of contact on the October 10th contact by the COBIA at 1223;)\* only one ship - the tanker TACHIBANA MARU - was sunk. This sinking was accomplished with torpedoes by the SAWFISH at 0134 October 9th in area DESTROY in position bearing 285°(T), distant 235 miles from Cape Bojeador.\*\*\*\*\* All other contacts with the exception of that made by the BLACKFISH at 2130, October 12th, were beyond firing range and could not be closed for attack. The BLACKFISH, on the other hand, made two night attacks on the destroyer at close range (3000 yards and 1900 yards), but all torpedoes missed.

A study of Diagram "B" shows that the submarines, while perhaps being well disposed in depth against normal shipping which operated from Formosa across Bashi Channel, and down the island chain to Cape Bojeador, Luzon,\*\*\*\*\* and vice-versa, were not so well disposed for reconnaissance in support of TF 38 operations. The diagram shows that at 1200, October 10th, Luzon Strait was not completely closed, there being a sixty mile gap between the COBIA and Garan Bi Point, Formosa. The tracks of the submarines show that no effort appears to have been made to maintain any organized reconnaissance of Luzon Strait between October 9th and October 15th. In fact a number of submarines crossed one another's tracks. However, in the afternoon of October 15th, probably because COMTHIRDFLT reported fleet action imminent,\*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 directed that the SAILFISH, ICEFISH, SAWFISH, PARCHE, DRUM, SEADRAGON, SHARK, BLACKFISH, SNOOK and COBIA were to deploy along a north-south line from the southern tip of Formosa to Cape Bojeador in order to block Luzon Strait against enemy forces which might attempt to pass through.\*\*\*\*\* The PARCHE and the DRUM had arrived in Luzon Strait on this date from patrols in San Bernardino Strait and Surigao Straits respectively. He directed each of

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\* War Patrol Report, COBIA, Report of SECOND War Patrol, Serial 035, November 5th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report, SAILFISH, Report of TWELFTH War Patrol, Serial 037, December 11th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report, WHALE, Report of NINTH War Patrol, Serial 017, October 30th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report, BLACKFISH, Report of NINTH War Patrol, Serial 001, November 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report, SAWFISH, Report of EIGHTH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944 and War Patrol Report ICEFISH, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 011, November 13th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 327-44, Serial 00845, September 24th, 1944, to SAILFISH.

\*\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 150149, October 1944 to CINCPAC, COMINCH, COMSOWESPAC.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report, SAWFISH, Report of EIGHTH War Patrol, Serial 88-44, November 8th, 1944; also CTF 17 Dispatch 150931, October 1944 to all submarines concerned.



the submarines to patrol a rectangle sixty miles east and west, and twenty-one miles north and south. The rectangles were as shown on Diagram "I". He further directed that the lifeguard submarines, SAILFISH, ICEFISH and SAWFISH were to man their rectangles after completing their lifeguard duties.\* CINCPOA advised COMTHIRDFLT of these new dispositions.\*\* The submarines concerned, with the exception of the SAWFISH which was retained on lifeguard duties, promptly moved toward their new positions, and by 1200, October 16th, were in reasonably effective reconnaissance positions, except for a gap of about eighty-five miles between the PARCHE and the SAILFISH. Fortunately, no enemy forces came through this gap at this time. From north to south these submarines were SAILFISH, PARCHE, DRUM, SEADRAGON, SHARK,\*\*\* BLACKFISH, SNOOK, and COBIA. By 0719, October 17th, most of the submarines had readjusted their stations, although the ICEFISH was still readjusting. Their positions now, from north to south, were SAILFISH, PARCHE, DRUM, SEADRAGON, SHARK,\*\*\* BLACKFISH, SNOOK and COBIA. If the SHARK succeeded in getting on station as seems highly probable, this new arrangement also provided a reasonably effective block against enemy forces endeavoring to pass through Luzon Strait, although there was still a gap of about forty-five miles between the SAILFISH and the PARCHE.

In connection with the above, CTF 17 believed that Babuyan Channel directly north of Cape Engano was mined and directed his submarines to avoid this channel.\*\*\*\* He also directed the COBIA and SAILFISH to stay clear of the mineable waters in the eastern part of their rectangles.\*

(b) Northwest Coast Formosa

The sole submarine off the northwest coast of Formosa was the TANG which arrived on station on October 10th. The Commanding Officer was directed to operate in Area 11-C, and to join the coordinated attack group (wolf pack) SILVERSIDES, TRIGGER, and SALMON, also operating in that area, if he so desired,\*\*\*\* but instead, he chose to operate to the northwest of Formosa. In making this decision he realized that the wolf pack was operating to the northeastward of Formosa, and that the area to the northwestward was vacant. Mindful of the fact that Japanese shipping to and from the Empire passed on either side of Formosa, he wished to place himself in a fruitful area. In this he was successful, for on October 10th he sank the small cargo ship JOSHU GO, and

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\* CTF 17 Dispatch 150931, October 1944 to all submarines concerned.

\*\* CINCPOA Dispatch 150932, October 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\* Location of SHARK not known as SHARK was lost on October 24th, 1944 with all records.

\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 326-44, Serial 00841, September 24th, 1944, to TANG.



TABLE 10  
 LIFEGUARD SUBMARINES RESCUING AIRMEN  
 DURING THE PERIOD  
 October 10th, to 0719, October 17th, 1944

TASK FORCE 17									
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	0719	17
October									
SAILFISH			0-6 E-5	0-1					
SAWFISH							0-1		
STERLET	0-4 E-2								
TRIGGER			0-1						
TASK FORCE 71									
	None								

0 - Officer E - Enlisted





on October 11th he sank the even smaller cargo ship OITA MARU.\* His location between October 11th and 0719, October 17th, is not entirely known. The TANG was sunk some days later on this patrol, and the only information directly available is the War Patrol Report, prepared from memory about one year later, by her commanding officer, who had been a prisoner of the Japanese until the termination of the war. However, it appears that during this period (October 10th - 0719 October 17th) he operated off northwest Formosa in Formosa Strait, sank no more shipping, and made no important contacts.\*\*

(c) Northeast Coast Formosa

The submarines on station here were a coordinated attack group (wolf pack) of three submarines, the SILVERSIDES, SALMON and TRIGGER,\*\*\* which were operating in Area 11-C to the eastward of Formosa.\*\*\* The TRIGGER was designated as lifeguard submarine on October 12th and 13th. She recovered one pilot on October 12th as shown on Table 10. Except for this lifeguard designation, all three submarines were on offensive patrol.

The wolf pack commander stationed his pack directly northeast of Formosa, primarily to intercept enemy shipping which was reportedly moving to and from the Empire along either side of the Nansei Shoto, and along the east or west coasts of Formosa.\*\*\* He also chose this location because the best port of Formosa - Kiirun Ko - is in this area, and ships employing this harbor, or fleeing it under TF 38 air strikes, might well choose to pass along the east coast of Formosa, thence through Luzon Strait towards Luzon for shelter.

It should be clear that when the above life line of traffic, and the limited number of submarines available for this duty are considered, the location of these submarines was well chosen for the destruction of merchant and naval shipping, and for reconnaissance in support of COMTHIRDFLT's operations (Diagram "B"), although on October 16th there was a gap of forty miles between the SILVERSIDES to the west, and the TRIGGER to the east, (Diagram "H"). These submarines were operating submerged during daylight. However, it is apparent that CTF 17 did not consider that he had closed this area effectively against an expected Japanese fleet sortie,

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\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, page 48, February 1947.

\*\* War Patrol Report TANG, Report of TWELFTH War Patrol, no serial, September 10th, 1945.

\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 326-44, Serial 00841, September 24th, 1944, to TANG.



for he had already ordered both the WHALE and SEAHORSE to support the three submarines there,\* by taking station on the southwest end of the Nansei Shoto. At 0719, as shown in Diagram "I", the SEAHORSE was in position; the WHALE was still en route but making slow headway since she was submerged.

None of the five submarines northeast of Formosa made contact on any Japanese shipping of consequence, whether merchant or naval, during this period. However, they did sight numerous sampans, two small patrol craft, one small schooner and one trawler, none of which were attacked.

(d) MARU MORGUE

The submarines on station in the MARU MORGUE were the SKATE, SAURY, BURRFISH, SEA DOG, BARBEL and STERLET. These submarines were operating on offensive patrol. With the exception of the SKATE and the SEA DOG they generally remained submerged during daylight although on October 10th all submarines operated on the surface. They did not operate as units of a coordinated attack group (wolf pack), but instead, operated independently of one another. They were stationed in the MARU MORGUE because considerable enemy shipping passed through these areas en route between the Empire and South China ports, Philippines, and Indo-China, and CTF 17 considered that the Nansei Shoto,\*\* and particularly the MARU MORGUE area, in view of the importance of Okinawa, would be fruitful. He expected enemy ships to attempt to escape CTF 38's air strikes and wished to interrupt them.\*\*\*

The submarines in MARU MORGUE were rotated through six areas either by permanent rotation plan or by dispatch. As has been pointed out under CONVOY COLLEGE, this was done to vary the intensity of action experienced by the submarines, to equalize their attack opportunities, and to vary the intensity of enemy air coverage and other anti-submarine activities. The six areas were: ABANDON, ABLAZE, ABDUCT, ABOLISH, ABRIDGE, and ABUSE.\*\*\*\* The rotation was always clockwise. It should be mentioned here that the western and southern boundaries to the MARU MORGUE were largely determined by known enemy minefields.\*\*\*\*\* While operating in the MARU MORGUE the submarines were directed to stay clear of waters which, by their very nature, might be mined.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Patrol Report WHALE, Report of NINTH War Patrol, Serial 017, October 30th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 301-44, Serial 00809, September 6th, 1944, to SKATE.

\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 262316, September 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\*\* Submarine Operational History World War II, prepared by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 87.

\*\*\*\*\* Ibid, page 85.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 316-44, Serial 00830, September 12th, 1944, to STERLET.



On October 10th the SAURY was in area ABANDON; the BURRFISH in ABLAZE; the STERLET in ABDUCT; the SEA DOG in ABOLISH; the BARBEL in ABRIDGE; and the SKATE in ABUSE. At this time, owing to the limited number of submarines available, and to the freedom of action accorded to each submarine in its own area, the MARU MORGUE was necessarily loosely patrolled. However, it was also loosely patrolled due to the fact that, on occasion, CTF 17 ordered the submarines to patrol in a definite part of their areas. As examples, he ordered the SAURY, commencing October 9th, to patrol the eastern edge of area ABANDON,\* and the BURRFISH to patrol the western part of area ABLAZE.\*\*

Diagram "B" shows that, as a consequence, at noon on October 10th, there were very large gaps between the northernmost submarines, the SKATE and the SAURY (200 miles), and between the northernmost submarines, and those next south, i.e., the SKATE and the BARBEL (75 miles), and the SAURY and the BURRFISH (175 miles). The reason for this is not hard to find. It is clear that the strikes of TF 38 were expected to drive shipping out of the harbors in these southern areas, notably out of Naha and Buckner Bay (Nakagusuku Wan) and out of certain harbors within Amami Gunto. The submarines were supposed to be so positioned as to facilitate their accomplishing maximum damage to such shipping.\*\*\* Would this not have required that they be as close to Naha and Buckner Bay as possible, consistent with safety against mines and enemy air power? A study of the chart shows that the 100 fathom curve, which at this time was considered the minimum depth for safe operation against mines,\*\*\*\* ran about ten miles from both Naha and Buckner Bay, and that the water deepens rapidly beyond this curve. Submarine commanders consulted stated that the danger from Japanese land-based air power was not great; that they could and did operate safely within close range of such air power.

However, the submarines were not well stationed to be effective. The SEA DOG was about thirty miles from Naha; the STERLET about sixty miles from Buckner Bay. Does it not appear that they might have been positioned more effectively had they closed in to just beyond the 100-fathom curve?

In this connection, it is of interest to note that despite CTF 38's air strikes on October 10th, very little shipping of any consequence was either discovered in the important harbors or departed the various ports in the area, and therefore no submarines in the MARU MORGUE made any sinkings on that day. In view of this fact, does it not seem somewhat

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\* War Patrol Report SAURY, Report of ELEVENTH War Patrol, Serial 023, November 29th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report BURRFISH, Report of FOURTH War Patrol, Serial 024, December 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\* CINCPOA Dispatch 262316, September 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Plan 1-43, Serial 0807, June 24th, Annex "B" para. 24.



surprising that CTF 17, after CTF 38's air strikes, did not direct some of the submarines in the MARU MORGUE to close the Empire and to operate in the HIT PARADE in support of those submarines there, rather than to have allowed them to operate more or less as usual? Because of the distance between the MARU MORGUE and the HIT PARADE, might it not have been even wiser had he directed the MARU MORGUE submarines to form within the MARU MORGUE a reconnaissance line normal to the mean track between the Empire and Okinawa, and thereby offer some protection to TF 38, which would be operating off Formosa the following day, October 11th, as well as on the 12th and 13th?

Throughout the period October 10th to 0719 October 17th, the submarines in the MARU MORGUE carried out their routine patrols and scheduled rotations. However, on October 15th, CTF 17 directed the BARBEL, in ABUSE, to operate along the eastern edge of ABANDON; the SKATE, in ABANDON, to patrol a definite station in ABLAZE,\* (vicinity Latitude 27°-30'N; Longitude 130°-45'E); and the SAURY, in ABLAZE, to patrol a definite station in ABDUCT, and in so doing to patrol close in to Okinawa.\*\* He also ordered the BURRFISH which had, by rotation, entered area ABOLISH, to patrol close to Okinawa,\*\* until further orders.\*\*\* Why he made these definite assignments, rather than to conform to the usual practice which permitted the submarine commander to operate at discretion within his designated area, is not explained. However, as a fleet action was expected by COMTHIRDFLT, it is presumed that CTF 17 ordered the BURRFISH to take station off Naha, and the SAURY to take station off Buckner Bay, in order that they might be in position to report any enemy naval forces leaving or entering either harbor.

It is of interest to note that except for the BARBEL in area ABUSE which reported having contacted at 0348, October 13th, a convoy of three AK, one AP and one AO escorted by two destroyers and except for the SKATE which, on October 16th at 2050, reported having made a contact at 2030 (actually the contact was at 1924\*) on an enemy task group of three large ships, one destroyer, and two destroyer escorts in Latitude 28°-01'N, Longitude 130°-45'E on course 010°T speed eighteen.\*\*\*\* None of the submarines in the MARU MORGUE made any contacts of consequence whatsoever on enemy shipping between October 9th and 0719, October 17th,\*\*\*\*\* although a hospital ship was sighted passing through areas ABOLISH and ABRIDGE on October 9th.

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\* War Patrol Report SKATE, Report of SIXTH War Patrol, Serial 052, November 2nd, 1944, CTF 17 Dispatch 150312, October 1944 to All Subs NR 3.

\*\* War Patrol Report SAURY, Report of ELEVENTH War Patrol, Serial 023, November 29th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report BURRFISH, Report of FOURTH War Patrol, Serial 024, December 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* SKATE Dispatch 161150, October 1944 to CTF 17.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Reports of Submarines concerned.



Attacks were made as follows:

(1) The BARBEL made two night surface attacks. On her first attack she fired six torpedoes all of which missed; on her second she fired four torpedoes. She claimed sinking one destroyer with two hits and damaging one oiler with one hit but actually appears to have made no hits whatsoever on the destroyer.\* No information is available as to whether or not she succeeded in torpedoing the oiler.

(2) The SKATE which was on the surface, fired three torpedoes at her task group by sound. She was unable to fire by sight as a rain squall obscured the targets. She reported hearing one torpedo explosion, but as the Japanese did not report any damage to this group on this day, the torpedoes must have missed.\*\*

The contact made by the SKATE was fairly correct since the enemy force contacted consisted of two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, and three destroyers. This was the SECOND Striking Force less DESDIV TWENTY-ONE (three destroyers), and the USHIO, which had departed Bungo Suido at 0700, October 15th; had then headed for the area east of Okinawa but, owing to the strength of the Allied Forces off Formosa, had been diverted to Amami O Shima for refueling of destroyers. It arrived at Amami O Shima 1700, October 17th.\*\*\* This SKATE contact caused CTF 17 some concern for at 0425 October 17th he queried the SKATE as to whether ships contacted were heading northerly.\*\*\*\* This was important information since if true it indicated that perhaps the Japanese were retiring.

(e) Nagasaki - Sasebo

The submarines in the Nagasaki - Sasebo area were the ESCOLAR, PERCH, CROAKER and GUARDFISH. The first three submarines formed a coordinated attack group (wolf pack), whereas the GUARDFISH was a remnant of a previous wolf pack which had broken up when the other two members returned to Pearl Harbor. All four of these submarines had been directed to patrol in Areas 9 and 12, which areas were to the westward of Kyushu. The basic orders for the first three submarines are not available, but COMTHIRDFLT was informed on September 27th that there would be three submarines off Nagasaki - Sasebo.\*\*\*\*\* This presumes that during CTF 38's strikes on the Nansei Shoto, Formosa, and northern Luzon,

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\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947, page 4.

\*\* War Patrol Report SKATE, Report of SIXTH War Patrol, Serial 052, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104, pages 16, 17; also War Diary DESRON 1, October 17th, 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 161925 October 1944 to SKATE.

\*\*\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 270306, September 1944 to COMTHIRDFLT.



the submarines would be in Area 9. Diagram "B" confirms this presumption. These submarines generally operated submerged during daylight.

Since the ESCOLAR was lost late on October 17th or early October 18th, presumably by striking a mine,\* her exact locations prior to that time are not known. However, as both the CROAKER and the PERCH were operating just outside the 100-fathom curve (Diagram "B"), it is presumed that the ESCOLAR was also operating in similar waters. All submarines were stationed in the vicinity of the foci of the trade routes moving south from Shimonoseki Suido and from Nagasaki and Sasebo, and remained in those foci until October 15th when they moved, whether by order of CTF 17 because of COMTHIRDFLT's expectation of a fleet action, or by order of the wolf pack commander, into Tsushima Strait. This left this vital area completely open to enemy transit by naval as well as merchant shipping.

Fortunately, no enemy naval forces of consequence passed through this area during this time although alternative route Three\*\* for the sortie of the Japanese Fleet from the Inland Sea passed through Shimonoseki Suido and thence southwest and south through these waters. In view of the fundamental importance to COMTHIRDFLT of information concerning the movements of enemy forces through this area, would it not have been wiser to have left the original three submarines in this vital area and then to have directed other submarines to block the other important passes south from Tsushima Strait? Could not the additional submarines required for this purpose have been better employed here than in MARU MORGUE or even in CONVOY COLLEGE? As it was, the prospect of obtaining early vital information concerning the movements of Japanese fleet units was poor indeed.

Great care had to be exercised in operating in this Strait as its waters were known to be mined\*\*\* During the period October 9th to 0719, October 17th, only the CROAKER and possibly the ESCOLAR contacted any enemy shipping of consequence. The CROAKER sank a small cargo ship on October 9th with four torpedoes. She claimed sinking a mine sweeper with three torpedoes on October 12th but this claim was disallowed\*\*\*\*

The GUARDFISH commenced her retirement through Area 9 on October 10th.

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- \* Submarine Operational History World War II, prepared by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 83.
  - \*\* Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).
  - \*\*\* Submarine Operational History World War II, prepared by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vol. I, page 45.
  - \*\*\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Losses During World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947.



On October 13th she departed that area for Midway. She made no important contacts,\* excepting on an RO class submarine on October 12th off Yaku Shima.

(f) HIT PARADE

The submarines assigned to the HIT PARADE on October 10th were assigned to two definite areas. These areas were (1) the approaches to Bungo Suido, and (2) the approaches to Tokyo Bay.

(1) The Approaches to Bungo Suido

A coordinated attack group (wolf pack) consisting of three submarines, BESUGO, RONQUIL, and GABILAN, was assigned Sections 7 and 8 of the HIT PARADE. The submarines of this attack group were normally assigned stations within these sections by their wolf pack commander (the Commanding Officer, BESUGO).\*\* All submarines, other than those of this group, were removed from this area in order to give the attack group freedom of action.

The BESUGO, RONQUIL, and GABILAN were directed to rendezvous at 0500, October 5th in Latitude 30°-00'N, Longitude 160°-00'E; to proceed from there at a speed of advance of about thirteen knots along Latitude 30°-00'N to Longitude 132°-00'E; to then proceed into their designated areas, and to commence conducting offensive patrols not later than sunset (1749) October 9th. They were further directed to conduct their patrols in such a manner as to prevent undetected sortie of enemy task forces through Bungo Suido.\*\*\*

These orders presented an extremely tight schedule to the wolf pack commander as well as to the submarine commanding officers.\*\*\*\* It was clear, since the distance from the above rendezvous point to Longitude 132°-00'E was 1456 miles, and to the eastern boundary of Sections 7 and 8 (Longitude 133°-15'E) was 1391 miles, and since the number of hours between 0500, October 5th and sunset (1749), October 9th was 108.3, that, unless an average speed of advance of about 13.4 knots was maintained (CTF 17 ordered an average speed of advance of about thirteen knots),\*\*\* they could not possibly reach the designated Longitude (132°-00'E) by sunset, October 9th. It was also clear that, unless an average speed of about 12.8 knots was maintained, they could not even cross the eastern boundary of their patrol areas by that time.

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\* War Patrol Report GUARDFISH, Report of NINTH War Patrol, Serial 041, October 24th, 1944.

\*\* Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet letter, Serial 2226, May 4th, 1951, to President, Naval War College, paragraph 5.

\*\*\* CTF 17 Operation Order 328-44, Serial 00847, September 25th, 1944, to TG 17.17.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report, BESUGO, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944.



In addition, it must also have been clear to them that once they had arrived at Longitude 132°-00'E, as directed by CTF 17, they would still be about 160 miles from their assigned stations off Bungo Suido, and would have to make good during the night a speed of advance of about thirteen knots to be in position off the Bungo Suido at sunrise (0613), October 10th. This would satisfy CINCPAC's dispatch\* of September 26th, wherein he had advised COMTHIRDFLT that on October 10th one pack of three submarines would be off Bungo Suido in the HIT PARADE.

However, the planning was too tight and did not allow for those unusual circumstances, such as heavy weather (Plate I) and enemy opposition, which should have been anticipated at sea in these areas at this time of the year 1944. The result of this tight planning was that none of the three submarines was on station off Bungo Suido as ordered. The BESUGO and RONQUIL did not arrive on station until early morning, October 11th, and the GABILAN did not arrive there until the forenoon of October 12th.

This inability to be off Bungo Suido at the specified time and date was due to several factors. In the first place the three submarines rendezvoused as planned at about 0415, October 5th, and then proceeded together.\*\* However, at 1910, October 6th, the wolf pack commander directed all ships to proceed as previously directed, because he had made a contact on a small enemy patrol boat, and he desired to destroy it.\*\* At the same time, because of the tight schedule, he did not wish to delay the RONQUIL and GABILAN. The latter submarines proceeded on, but on October 7th ran into heavy seas which forced them to slow down. The GABILAN stated in her War Patrol Report... "Mounting seas forced us to slow to two engine speed. Looks as if our schedule is shot now."\*\*\*...and the RONQUIL reported on the same date... "Seas increasing during the day. We are near typhoon reported by COMSUBPAC."\*\*\*\* That these seas were evidently serious becomes apparent when the following dispatch from CTF 17, transmitted at 2021, October 7th, is considered: "At 0300, October 8th the center of a typhoon will be in Latitude 29°-00'N, Longitude 137°-00'E, moving north northeast at fourteen knots. Hurricane winds and precipitous seas one hundred miles radius."\*\*\*\*\*

Meanwhile, on October 6th, the BESUGO engaged the patrol boat, employing both guns and three torpedoes, but the gunfire was ineffective owing to rough seas, and the torpedoes missed. At 2235, after four hours of battle with no damage to either side, excepting some machine gun hits,

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\* CINCPAC Dispatch 262316, September 1944, to COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report GABILAN, Report of THIRD War Patrol, Serial 031, November 13th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of SECOND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 071121, October 1944, to BESUGO, RONQUIL, GABILAN.



the Commanding Officer, BESUGO, broke off action because "any further delay meant a day's delay in arriving on station, and that was out of the question. Set course west making four engine speed."\*

The BESUGO maintained a higher speed of advance than did either the RONQUIL or GABILAN for, despite the fact that she had lost four hours in the engagement above referred to, and despite the fact that on October 8th she was forced to submerge for about six hours,\* she passed both the RONQUIL and GABILAN.

This was due, in part, to the fact that the GABILAN remained submerged for long hours after sighting Japanese aircraft, on both October 8th and October 9th\*\* - actually a total time submergence of about seventeen hours - and to the fact that the RONQUIL, which submerged on October 8th and October 9th for a total of about four hours,\*\*\* appears to have run at somewhat slower speed than did the BESUGO. The GABILAN actually was unsuccessfully bombed by a Japanese plane at 0843, October 9th.

The result of these delays was that at sunset October 9th the above three submarines were widely separated. Diagram "B" shows that the BESUGO, which was farthest to the westward, and therefore nearest to Longitude 132°-00'E, was 128 miles due east of that Longitude; the RONQUIL 186 miles due east; and the GABILAN 308 miles due east.

The operations of these submarines will be discussed separately.

(a) BESUGO

On October 10th at 0439, the BESUGO arrived at Longitude 132°-00'E, changed course to north, and entered her patrol area. She dived at dawn and remained submerged during the day. During the night of October 10th-11th she proceeded on northerly courses into the central sector of the approaches to Bungo Suido, arriving there at about 0523 when she submerged. She thereafter patrolled uneventfully until the night of October 12th-13th when she crossed over into the eastern sector of the approaches to the Bungo Suido, and relieved the GABILAN. She conducted patrols in the vicinity of Okino Shima, remaining submerged during daylight. Except for sighting small patrol boats and radar equipped planes, particularly night flying planes, her patrol was uneventful until 0746, October 15th, when, in Latitude 32°-30'N, Longitude 132°-36'E, while submerged, she sighted a task force which she reported

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\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report GABILAN, Report of THIRD War Patrol, Serial 031, November 13th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of SECOND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.



as three heavy cruisers (ATAGO, NACHI and AOBA classes), and one light cruiser (NATORI class), on course 140°(T), speed eighteen knots. She endeavored to attack, but was unable to get closer than 7500 yards.\* At about 1107 she sighted in Latitude 32°-34'N, Longitude 132°-39'E a large ship which she thought was a heavy cruiser, at a range of 14,000 yards, on course 135°(T), speed twenty knots. A destroyer was escorting the cruiser and was between the BESUGO and the cruiser. Although the Commanding Officer, BESUGO, considered that he might be able to make an attack on the destroyer, he attempted none in view of his definite orders. He did not report the above contacts when they occurred, but instead, delayed until he had surfaced after dark when he made a contact report thereon to CTF 17 and to COMTHIRDFLT.\*

The 0746 contact was made on the first section of the Japanese SECOND Striking Force composed of two heavy cruisers (NACHI and ASHIGARA), one light cruiser (ABUKUMA) and four destroyers (AKEBONO USHIO, SHIRANUHI, KASUMI);\*\* the 1107 contact was probably on the second section of the SECOND Striking Force composed of three destroyers (WAKABA, HATSUSHIMO, HATSUHARU).\*\* It is obvious that in both cases the identification was fairly accurate but the composition was considerably in error.

During the night the BESUGO crossed over into the western sector of the approaches to Bungo Suido where she relieved the RONQUIL. She patrolled this western sector uneventfully, except for sighting numerous enemy planes, until 2120, October 16th, when she sighted in Latitude 32°-14'N, Longitude 131°-59'E, two unescorted heavy cruisers on a southwesterly course at about twenty-two knots, zigzagging. She fired six torpedoes and at 2212 made one hit. She reported that both enemy cruisers had then returned to port via the Bungo Suido.\*\*\* These contacts were not on heavy cruisers but were instead on the destroyers WAKATSUKI and SUZUTSUKI which had just passed through Bungo Suido en route to Kagoshima for duty in connection with 653rd Air Group.\*\*\*\* The Commanding Officer, BESUGO was correct in claiming one hit, for at 2212 the SUZUTSUKI was torpedoed in the bow as a consequence of which both destroyers returned to the Inland Sea.\*\*\*\*

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\* War Patrol Report, BESUGO, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944; also, BESUGO Dispatch 161014, October 1944 to CTF 17.

\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944, also BESUGO Dispatch 161634 to CTF 17, information COMINCH, COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\*\*\* War Diary 653rd Air Group, October 1944 (Annex covering Operations of component units) WDC Document 160295, NA 12530; also Tabular Records of Movements of Destroyers, WDC Document 160620 and 160621, NA 11790.



At 0031, October 17th, the Commanding Officer, BESUGO, reported this contact to CTF 17 and COMTHIRDFLT. The remainder of his patrol until 0719, October 17th, was uneventful.\*

(b) RONQUIL

The RONQUIL arrived in her patrol area, which was the western sector of the approaches to Bungo Suido, in the early morning of October 11th, and at 0527 commenced patrolling the northwesterly tip of this sector, covering the trade routes from Bungo Suido to the south. During the 11th and 12th her patrol was uneventful. At 1903, October 12th, she moved into the central sector of the approaches to Bungo Suido and relieved the BESUGO.

During the 13th, 14th and 15th, the RONQUIL made no important contacts, although a number of airplanes and small patrol craft were contacted. During the night of the 15th she crossed over to the eastern sector of the approaches to Bungo Suido and relieved the BESUGO. She remained in this sector in a position about five miles south of Okino Shima throughout the 16th. Except for a number of unimportant contacts, her patrol until 0719, October 17th, 1944, was uneventful.\*\*

(c) GABILAN

The GABILAN arrived in her patrol area, which was the eastern sector of the approaches to Bungo Suido, at about 1200, October 12th, and remained on submerged patrol until about 1849 when she crossed over to the western sector of the approaches to Bungo Suido and relieved the RONQUIL. She arrived in the center of this sector at about 0405, October 13th. During the 13th, 14th, and 15th the GABILAN remained in this sector and made no important contacts. At 0000, October 16th, she crossed over to the center sector of the approaches to Bungo Suido and relieved the RONQUIL. She remained in this sector throughout the 16th. As was the case with the RONQUIL, except for a number of unimportant contacts, her patrol until 0719, October 17th, was uneventful.\*\*\*

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The above analysis shows that these three submarines were long delayed in arriving on station, and thereby were unable even to attempt to

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\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944, also BESUGO Dispatch 161634 to CTF 17, information COMINCH, COMTHIRDFLT.

\*\* War Patrol Report RONQUIL, Report of SECOND War Patrol, Serial 038, November 28th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report GABILAN, Report of THIRD War Patrol, Serial 031, November 13th, 1944.



close the approaches to Bungo Suido until the forenoon of October 12th. Meanwhile, COMTHIRDFLT had been striking the Nansei Shoto (Okinawa) on October 10th, northern Luzon (Aparri) on October 11th, and Formosa on October 12th. Each of these great air strikes might have been sufficient cause for the Japanese to have activated their SHO Operations for the defense of the Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon line. COMTHIRDFLT had been informed that his northern flank would be protected, in part, by TF 17 submarines operating off Bungo Suido commencing October 10th. There is nothing in the record to indicate whether or not COMTHIRDFLT was informed that Bungo Suido was not closed until October 12th and that even then the closing was of doubtful effectiveness, but it seems highly unlikely.

Diagrams "C" to "I" show that after the submarines had arrived in their assigned stations off Bungo Suido, there were occasions, particularly during daylight hours, when dangerous gaps existed in the patrol line. This was because the submarines normally submerged during daylight, and were therefore, forced to rely on periscope visual contacts only, as their radars at this time, October 1944, were ineffective during submergence. The World War II average reliable daylight range for periscope sightings on independent merchant ships during normal visibility was about five miles,\* and on escorted combatant ships about six miles.

From the above analysis it is clear that the submarines on station off Bungo Suido were not only insufficient in number to accomplish properly their objectives, but were too loosely coordinated to obtain maximum effectiveness. It also is clear that, in view of the importance of early information concerning the movements of Japanese forces departing Bungo Suido, a minimum of one additional submarine and a maximum of three additional submarines, which would give some defense in depth, were required to cover adequately the approaches to Bungo Suido.

## (2) The approaches to Tokyo Bay

(a) While the basic orders assigned the submarines off Tokyo Bay are not available, it is presumed that their objective was the prevention of the undetected sortie of enemy task forces through the approaches to Tokyo Bay. This presumption is based on CINCPAC's dispatch to COMTHIRDFLT wherein he stated that he had three submarines guarding Bungo Suido and two guarding the approaches to Tokyo Bay.

(b) One Submarine, the SEA DEVIL, was in the approaches to Tokyo Bay, and on October 10th was in excellent position for a single submarine to intercept shipping passing through the channel to the eastward of O Shima. However, one submarine was clearly inadequate to close the approaches to Tokyo Bay. In view of the importance of

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\* Submarine Warfare Instructions, USF 9 Navy Department 1946, page 16-5, paragraph 1604.



reconnaissance information, and the necessity for insuring that any enemy forces passing into or out of the approaches be discovered and reported to CINCPAC and COMTHIRDFLT, a minimum of three submarines were necessary. This would have permitted two submarines to be stationed to the eastward of O Shima and one submarine to the westward.

The SEA DEVIL made no important contacts until 1216, October 16th, when she contacted a 1500 ton cargo ship - the ISSIN MARU - and fired three torpedoes at her. All torpedoes missed.\* She remained on patrol until about sunset (1705) October 16th when by direction of CTF 17\*\* she headed for Majuro for refit. She appears to have been relieved by the TAMBOR at 2100, at which time the TAMBOR entered Area 4 of the HIT PARADE.\*\*\*

(c) The TAMBOR, which was en route to her patrol station in DUNKERS DERBY, received orders at 2100, October 14th to relieve the SEA DEVIL in Area 4 of HIT PARADE some time after sunset, October 16th.\*\*\* At the time of relieving, the TAMBOR was about sixty miles from the patrol station occupied by the SEA DEVIL. She was about forty miles from the above station at 0719, October 17th and therefore unable to patrol, even though loosely, the approaches to Tokyo Bay.

(d) The TREPANG, which had been directly south of Shio Misaki, Honshu, on October 9th, was en route to a station bearing 215°(T) distant about 120 miles from Yokohama. The TREPANG operated in this area from noon, October 10th until 1751, October 15th, when, having been relieved by the GREENLING she retired to Majuro.\*\*\*\*

During her patrol she sighted targets of consequence as follows:  
 (1) On October 11th, when at 0413 she fired three torpedoes at what she reported were two oilers with a destroyer escort. Although she claimed sinking one oiler she actually sank one landing craft of about 1000 tons.\*\*\*\*\* She also fired four torpedoes at an LST at 0802. All torpedoes missed.\*\*\*\* (2) On October 12th, when at 1840 she encountered sixty miles from O Shima in Latitude 34°-07'N; Longitude 138°-21'E an

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\* Deck Log SEA DEVIL, October 14th, 1944.

\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 141024, October 1944 to SEA DEVIL, GREENLING, TAMBOR.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report TAMBOR, Report of TWELFTH War Patrol, Serial 08019, November 30th, 1944; also CTF 17 Dispatch 141029 October 1944 to TAMBOR.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report TREPANG, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 011, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Ship Losses During World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by Joint Army and Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947, page 52.



enemy task force of two battleships escorted by two destroyers, on course 215°(T), speed twenty-three knots. She made two night surface attacks, one at 1932, the other at 1935. The 1932 attack was made with six torpedoes. She reported having made one hit in the bow of one of the destroyers, which sank immediately, and one hit on a battleship which promptly headed for Kobe. The 1935 attack was made with four torpedoes all of which missed. She trailed the damaged battleship but lost contact at 0057 the following morning. The identification of these ships was in error for no Japanese battleships were in this area, and Japanese records report no destroyer sunk in this area at this time.\* Actually the force consisted of the small light cruiser OYODO escorted by the destroyers FUYUTSUKI and SHIMOTSUKI. The FUYUTSUKI was torpedoed but did not sink as the damage was very slight.\*\*

(e) The GREENLING, which was en route to her patrol area and which on October 12th, was to eastward of the Bonin Islands, received orders on this date to proceed into the HIT PARADE and take over the duties which had been assigned the TREPANG.\*\*\* The GREENLING was directed to conduct her patrol in waters of one hundred fathoms or greater. She was authorized to pursue shipping into mineable waters.\*\*\* She made but one important contact during the period until 0719, October 17th. This occurred on October 13th when she fired four torpedoes at a medium sized cargo ship. All torpedoes missed.\*\*\*\*

### (3) Summary of HIT PARADE dispositions

The preceding analysis of the operations of the submarines in the HIT PARADE shows that these submarines were too few in number and too loosely disposed to be able to accomplish adequately their assigned objective of preventing the undetected sortie of enemy task forces through Bungo Suido and through the approaches to Tokyo Bay. In addition, Diagrams "B" to "I" show that during the period October 10th, to 0719, October 17th, there were no submarines on station off Kii Suido, the eastern entrance to the Inland Sea. Why this was so is not clear, for the Inland Sea was navigable between Kii Suido and Bungo Suido, the only two passages to the Inland Sea from the Pacific Ocean. Why CTF 17 did not also direct that Kii Suido be patrolled in order to prevent undetected sorties is not explained, but presumably he failed to close this strait either because he had superior intelligence information which indicated that the enemy did not intend to sortie via that strait, or

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\* Japanese Naval and Merchant Ship Losses During World War II by U.S. Submarines, prepared by Joint Army and Navy Assessment Committee, February 1947, page 52.

\*\* War Diary OYODO, October 1st-20th, 1944, WDC Document 161636.

\*\*\* CTF 17 Dispatch 121853, October 1944 to GREENLING.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report GREENLING, Report of ELEVENTH War Patrol, no serial number, November 23rd, 1944.



because of a shortage of submarines. But was such a decision sound? It would appear not, for not only is it unwise to rely fully on intelligence information since no matter what its reputation for correctness, it may well be wrong, but also is it not obvious that closing Bungo Suido without, at the same time, closing Kii Suido would not assure the accomplishment of the objective? Actually, the Japanese plans for the SHO Operations provided for sortie from the Inland Sea to the southern areas via one of three routes. One of these routes, discussed previously under Sasebo-Nagasaki, was through Shimonoseki Suido, the other two routes were through Bungo Suido and Kii Suido.\* (Plate XI) Does it not seem therefore that, in view of the importance to COMTHIRDFLT of information concerning the movements of Japanese Naval Forces through the HIT PARADE, it would have been wiser strategically to have reduced the number of submarines operating in CONVOY COLLEGE or MARU MORGUE or both and to have increased adequately the number of submarines operating off the above three key exits to the Pacific from the Inland Sea and Tokyo Bay. How else could an undetected sortie of enemy task forces have been prevented with the submarines available to CTF 17 in the western Pacific?

In addition to certain submarines which might have been taken from the MARU MORGUE and CONVOY COLLEGE, as above proposed, CTF 17 might also have obtained reinforcements for the HIT PARADE from the POLAR CIRCUIT (APOGON, TILEFISH), from DUNKERS DERBY (SNAPPER, BILLFISH) and from submarines reporting for patrol. The PERMIT off Truk was not available as she was on lifeguard duty.

It is of interest that at this time, October 10th, ten submarines (GREENLING, SEA FOX, SEAL, TAMBOR, HALIBUT, HADDOCK, TUNA, ATULE, JALLAO, PINTADO)\*\* were en route to their patrol areas where they were to relieve other submarines. While the complete logistics data concerning submarines to be relieved is not available to this study, there is sufficient data available, in Section "T" of the War Patrol Reports, to indicate that a number of these submarines to be relieved (SEAHORSE, WHALE, TREPANG, SNAPPER, SEA DEVIL, GUARDFISH)\*\* would have been able to remain on station some days longer had provision been made, upon their retirement, to refuel and resupply them at Saipan instead of at Midway or Majuro as was actually done. Had Saipan been employed some of these submarines might even have been returned to their patrol areas for a limited number of days if the situation so warranted.

While this overtime employment might have interfered with the overhaul and training programs of these submarines, and therefore might have upset CTF 17's logistics program as well, does it not seem reasonable that the necessity for having correct and early operational intelligence during KING II should have had priority over all other considerations?

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\* Chart attached to Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* War Patrol Reports of Submarines concerned.



(f) ALLIED POSITION AT 0719, OCTOBER 17TH

At 0719, October 17th - the time the Japanese lookout post at Suluan Island made its contact report on the Allied forces entering Leyte Gulf - the various Allied surface forces and groups, less submarines and motor torpedo boats were located in the following positions.

(a) SEVENTH Fleet

(1) Task Force 77

(a) TG 78.4 (Dinagat Attack Group) plus TG 77.5 Minesweeper group were off the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf.

(b) TG 77.2 (Bombardment and Fire Support Group) plus TG 77.6 (Beach Demolition Group) was bearing 128°(T), distant 115 miles from Suluan Island.

(c) TG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group) was bearing 134°(T), distant forty-five miles from Suluan Island.

(d) TF 78 (Northern Attack Force) plus TU 77.4.34 (Escort Carrier Group) was bearing 123°(T), distant 480 miles from Suluan Island.

(e) TG 79.1's Tractor Group ABLE and TG 79.2's Tractor Group BAKER were bearing 119°(T), distant 480 miles from Suluan Island.

(f) TG 79.1 (Attack Group ABLE) plus TG 79.2 (Attack Group BAKER) plus TU 77.1.1 (Fleet Flagship Unit) plus TU 77.4.14 (Escort Carrier Group) less Tractor Groups ABLE and BAKER were bearing 119°(T), distant 665 miles from Suluan Island.

(g) TU 77.1.2 (Cruiser Unit) was bearing 128°(T), distant 860 miles from Suluan Island.

(h) TG 78.6 Reinforcement Group ONE plus TU 77.4.24 (Escort Carrier Unit) was bearing 130°(T), distant 930 miles from Suluan Island.

(i) TG's 78.7 and 78.8 Reinforcement Groups TWO and THREE were at anchor at Hollandia.

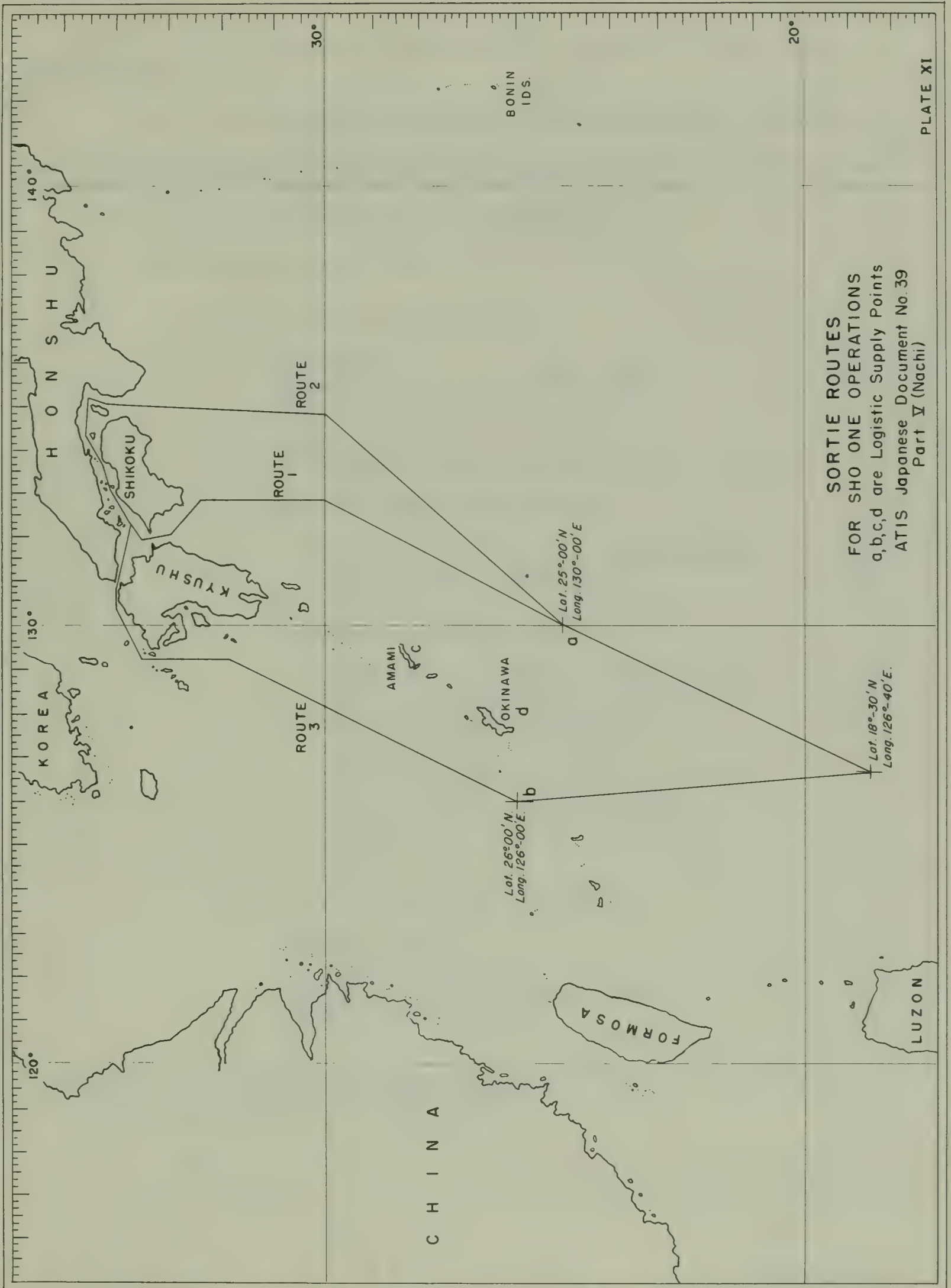
(b) THIRD Fleet

(1) Task Force 38

(a) TG 38.1 was bearing 005°(T), distant 620 miles from Suluan Island.

(b) TG's 38.2 and 38.3 were bearing 006°(T), distant 640 miles from Suluan Island.





**SORTIE ROUTES**  
**FOR SHO ONE OPERATIONS**  
 a,b,c,d are Logistic Supply Points  
 ATIS Japanese Document No. 39  
 Part V (Nachi)

PLATE XI





(c) TG 38.4 was bearing 348°(T) distant 270 miles from Suluan Island.

(2) TG 30.3 was bearing 112°(T) distant 300 miles from Garan Bi.

(g) COMPOSITION OF FORCES AND TASKS ASSIGNED (0719, OCTOBER 17TH, 1944)

(a) TF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force)

(1) Composition of Forces

(a) (1) TG 77.1 Flagship Group\*

NASHVILLE	1 CL
AMMEN, MULLANY, ABNER REED, BUSH	4 DD
1 AGC	

(2) TG 77.2 Bombardment and Fire Support Group\*\*

(a) Fire Support Unit NORTH

MISSISSIPPI, WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND	3 OBB
AULICK, CONY, SIGOURNEY	3 DD

(b) Fire Support Unit SOUTH

TENNESSEE, CALIFORNIA, PENNSYLVANIA	3 OBB
LOUISVILLE, PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS	3 CA
HONOLULU, DENVER, COLUMBIA	3 CL
LEUTZE, NEWCOMB, BENNION	
HEYWOOD L EDWARDS, RICHARD P LEARY,	
ROBINSON, ROSS, ALBERT W GRANT,	
BRYANT, HALFORD, CLAXTON, THORN,	
WELLES	13 DD

(3) TG 77.3 Close Covering Group\*

PHOENIX, BOISE	2 CL
SHROPSHIRE, AUSTRALIA	2 CA
WARRAMUNGA, ARUNTA, BACHE, BEALE,	
HUTCHINS, DALY, KILLEN	7 DD

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\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 20th, 1944.

\*\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 17th, 1944.

(4) TG 77.4 Escort Carrier Group\*

SANGAMON (22 VF, 9 VT), SUWANNEE (22 VF, 9 VT), CHENANGO (22 VF, 9 VT), SANTEE (24 VF, 9 VT), NATOMA BAY (18 VF, 12 VT), MANILA BAY (18 VF, 12 VT), MARCUS ISLAND (18 VF, 12 VT), FANSHAW BAY (18 VF, 12 VT), WHITE PLAINS (18 VF, 12 VT), KALININ BAY (18 VF, 12 VT), SAVO ISLAND (18 VF, 12 VT), ST LO (18 VF, 12 VT) 12 CVE

Total aircraft 234 VF, 132 VT - - 366

McCORD, TRATHEN, HAZELWOOD, HAGGARD, FRANKS, HAILEY, HOEL, HEERMANN, JOHNSTON 9 DD  
 RICHARD M ROWELL, EVERSOLE, COOLBAUGH, OBERRENDER, LORAY WILSON, WALTER C WANN, RAYMOND, SAMUEL B ROBERTS 8 DE

(5) TG 77.5 Mine Sweeping and Hydrographic Group\*

SOUTHARD, CHANDLER, HOVEY, LONG, HAMILTON, HOWARD, PALMER 7 DMS  
 PREBLE, BREEZE 2 DM  
 10 AM, 24 YMS, 4 LCPR's, 1 APD

(6) TG 77.6 Beach Demolition Group

11 APD, 7 UDT

(7) TG 77.7 Service Group

BOWERS, WHITEHURST, WILLMARTH, WITTER, MANNING. 5 DE  
 4 AO, 4 IX(AO's) 3 AE, 3 AN, 1 AKN, 1 ARL, 1 ARS, 1 AO(W).

(b) TF 78 Northern Attack Force

(1) TG 78.1 Palo Attack Group\*\*

RUSSELL, JOHN RODGERS, MURRAY, HARRISON, McKEE 5 DD  
 1 AGC, 7 APA, 2 AKA, 3 LSD, 1 AP, 1 AK, 12 LST, 3 LSM, 3 PC, 1 SC, 2 LCI(G), 5 LCI(R), 2 LCI(D), 7 LCI(S), 2 AT, 3 PCE(R)

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\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 17th, 1944.

\*\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 20th, 1944.



- (2) TG 78.2 San Ricardo Attack Group\*
- (a) FLETCHER, LaVALLETTE, JENKINS, ANDERSON 4 DD  
 6 APA, 2 AKA, 2 LSD, 2 AP, 14 LST, 9 LSM,  
 3 PC, 1 SC, 6 LCI(R), 2 LCI(G), 1 ATO
- (b) Escorted by TU 77.4.34  
 KITKUN BAY (18 VF, 12 VT), GAMBIER BAY  
 (18 VF, 12 VT) 2 CVE
- Total aircraft 36 VF, 24 VT - - 60
- DENNIS, J.C. BUTLER 2 DE
- (3) TG 78.3 Panaon Attack Group\*
- HUGHES, LANG, STACK, SIGSBEE, RINGGOLD,  
 SHROEDER, DASHIELL 7 DD  
 3 LSI, 1 CM, 2 PC, 2 LCI(G),  
 2 LCI(R), 1 LCI(D)
- (4) TG 78.4 Dinagat Attack Group\*\*
- DENVER, COLUMBIA 2 CL  
 HUGHES, STACK, LANG, ROSS, BRYANT,  
 ROBINSON, ALBERT W GRANT 7 DD  
 6 APD, 2 PF
- (5) TG 78.5 Harbor Entrance Control Group\*\*
- 2 PF, 4 LCI
- (6) TG 78.6 Reinforcement Group ONE\*\*\*
- (a) MORRIS, HOWORTH, MUSTIN, STEVENS 4 DD  
 2 PF, 6 APA, 1 AP, 1 AK, 32 LST,  
 6 XAK, 12 LCI, 1 ARL
- (b) Escorted by TU 77.4.24  
 KADASHAN BAY (17 VF, 12 VT), OMMANEY BAY  
 (18 VF, 12 VT) 2 CVE
- Total aircraft 35 VF, 24 VT - - 59
- R.W. SUESENS, ABERCROMBIE 2 DE

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\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 20th, 1944.  
 \*\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 17th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 22nd, 1944.

(7) TG 78.7 Reinforcement Group TWO\*

NICHOLAS, O'BANNON, TAYLOR, HOPEWELL 4 DD  
 2 PF, 24 Liberty Ships, 1 PG,  
 33 LST, 1 AO, 4 IX, 1 AO(W),  
 1 AN, 1 AKN, 1 ARS.

(8) TG 78.8 Reinforcement Group THREE\*\*

17 Liberty Ships, 3 AKS, 1 AN,  
 1 APC, 6 LST, 4 PF

(c) TF 79 Southern Attack Force\*\*\*

(1) TG 79.1 Attack Group ABLE

(a) TG 79.3 Transport Group ABLE

ERBEN, WALKER, HALE, ABBOTT, KIDD,  
 GANSEVOORT, BLACK, CHAUNCEY, BRAINE 9 DD  
 2 AGC, 11 APA, 2 AP, 2 LSD, 1 LSV,  
 3 AKA, 1 APH, 1 AK, 12 LCT

(b) Escorted by TU 77.4.14  
 SAGINAW BAY (18 VF, 12 VT), PETROF BAY  
 (18 VF, 12 VT) 2 CVE

Total aircraft 36 VF, 24 VT - - 60

EDMONDS, R.S. BULL 2 DE

(c) Tractor Group ABLE

STEMBEL 1 DD  
 31 LST, 3 PCS, 3 SC, 6 LCC, 18 LCI(G),  
 4 LCI(M), 2 LCI(A), 2 LCI(L)

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\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 24th, 1944.  
 \*\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 29th, 1944.  
 \*\*\* Arrived Leyte Gulf October 20th, 1944.



(2) TG 79.2 Attack Group BAKER

(a) TG 79.4 Transport Group BAKER

PICKING, SPROSTON, WICKES,  
 ISHERWOOD, CHARLES J. BADGER,  
 HALLIGAN, HARADIN, TWIGGS,  
 MacDONOUGH, LUCE  
 1 AGC, 10 APA, 3 AP, 3 AKA,  
 1 LSV, 3 LSD, 1 AK

10 DD

(b) TG 79.6 Tractor Group BAKER

REMEY, MERTZ, MONSSEN, McDERMUT,  
 McGOWAN, McNAIR, MELVIN  
 24 LST, 6 LSM, 10 LCT, 4 LCI(M),  
 2 LCI(A), 13 LCI(G), 2 LCI(L) (S&FF),  
 3 ARS, 1 ARL, 1 ATF

7 DD

(2) Tasks Assigned

(a) TF 77 (Central Philippines Attack Force)

To transport, protect and establish ashore in the Leyte Gulf - Surigao Strait area, major elements of the SIXTH Army; to arrange or provide a protection for convoys and naval task forces and direct air support for operations in the objective area until relieved by Commander Allied Air Forces; to transport to the objective area, in naval assault shipping, supporting troops and their supplies; to deny enemy reinforcement of the Leyte area from Samar, western Visayas and northeastern Mindanao areas; to clear Surigao Strait of hostile naval forces and shipping and to sweep it to open it for naval operations and shipping in the Camotes Sea and adjacent waters, in conjunction with operations of the SIXTH Army; to escort and protect shipping to the objective area until relieved by COMSEVENTHFLT.\*

(1) TG 77.1 Flagship Group\*\*

To perform tasks as directed by CTF 77

(2) TG 77.2 Bombardment and Fire Support Group

To carry out prior to D-day, bombardment and night harassing fire, in accordance with instructions from CTF 79; to cover and

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\* Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC Operation Plan 12-44, September 25th, 1944, page 4.

\*\* Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, September 26th, 1944.

control activities of beach demolition units and minesweeping units; to control support aircraft at objective until arrival Commander Support Aircraft, TF 77.

(a) Fire Support Unit NORTH

To carry out bombardment, night harassing fire and close fire support as directed by CTF 78.

(b) Fire Support Unit SOUTH

To carry out bombardment, night harassing fire and close fire support as directed by CTF 79.

(3) TG 77.3 Close Covering Group

To escort and provide close support to objective area; to carry out bombardment and night harassing fire, and to provide close fire support for ground forces and neutralization of shore batteries; all as required by CTF 78.

(4) TG 77.4 Escort Carrier Group

To provide air protection and direct air support of ground and naval forces in the objective area until relieved by Commander Allied Air Forces; to provide anti-submarine patrol, and to provide rescue of flight personnel forced down in objective area.

(5) TG 77.5 Minesweeping and Hydrographic Group

To sweep for acoustic, moored, and influence mines in the objective area; and to conduct hydrographic survey and install navigational aids as directed.

(6) TG 77.6 Beach Demolition Group

To clear beach obstacles as directed by CTF 79.

(7) TG 77.7 Service Group

To provide logistic support for naval forces in the objective area.

(b) TF 78 Northern Attack Force\*

To transport safely Headquarters SIXTH Army and X Corps,

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\* Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, September 26th, 1944, as modified.



SIXTH Army to Leyte area; on D-3 day to seize Suluan Island, southern Homonhon Island and northern Dinagat Island in Leyte Gulf; at H-hour on D-day to establish major elements of the X Corps ashore in the Tacloban area of Leyte Island; on D-day to establish a Regimental Combat Team (RCT) of the 24th Infantry ashore at Panaon Strait.

(c) TF 79 Southern Attack Force\*

To transport safely the XXIV Corps, SIXTH Army to Leyte area. On D-day establish major elements of the XXIV Corps ashore in the San Jose and Dulag areas of Leyte Island.

(3) Discussion

It is clear from the above that TF 77 was a very powerful amphibious force, which had the capability of carrying out the tasks assigned. It was capable of defeating any Japanese forces which might be encountered, with the possible exception of the Combined Fleet. But, even in such case, the superiority of Allied carrier pilots over Japanese carrier pilots, as observed during the Battle of the Philippine Sea in June 1944, if it continued during October 1944, might well have been sufficient to turn the tide of battle toward TF 77. However, TF 77 was not expected to engage in a major naval action, but was, instead, to be protected by the naval and air power of TF 38. It should be clear then that, should the naval and air power of TF 77 be coordinated with that of TF 38, the resulting combination was capable of defeating any Japanese naval force of whatever strength which might be brought against it.

(b) Commander Allied Naval Forces, SOWESPAC (0719, October 17th, 1944)

(1) Composition of Forces

(a) TG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons)

(1) TU 70.1.3

127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 134, 137,  
 138, 146, 150, 151, 152, 190, 191, 192,  
 194, 195, 196, 320, 321, 323, 324, 325,  
 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 488, 489,  
 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497,  
 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 1 US Army QS  
 13, 1 crash boat\*\*

45 MTB's

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\* Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, September 26th, 1944, as modified.

\*\* CTG 70.1 Operation Plan 2-44, October 5th, 1944.

(2) TU 70.1.6 (Advance Tender Unit)

3 AGP, 1 AVP

(b) TF 71 (Submarines West Australia)

(1) TG 71.1 (American Submarines)

(a) On Patrol

    ANGLER, BLUEGILL, COD, DARTER,  
    LAPON, BERGALL, BONEFISH, DACE,  
    HAMMERHEAD, PADDLE, ROCK 11 SS

(b) En route Patrol

    BATFISH, BREAM, GUITARRO,  
    GURNARD, RATON 5 SS

(c) En route Base

    BAYA, CAVALLA, HAWKBILL, RAY,  
    BECUNA, FLASHER, HOE 7 SS

(d) Total 23 SS

(2) TF 71.7 (British and Dutch Submarines)

(a) On Patrol

    ZWAARDVISH, STOIC, STURDY, SIRDAR 4 SS

(b) En route Patrol

    STORM, TANTIVY 2 SS

(c) En route Base

    SEA ROVER, SPITEFUL, TELEMACHUS 3 SS

(d) Total 9 SS

(c) TF 72 (Submarines East Australia)

(a) Special Mission

    NAUTILUS, NARWHAL, CERO 3 SS



(d) TF 73 (Naval Air Force SEVENTH Fleet)\*

Total aircraft (Table 5)	87
TANGIER, CURRITUCK	2 AV
SAN PABLO, ORCA, HERON, SAN CARLOS, HALF MOON	5 AV

(2) Tasks Assigned

(a) TG 70.1 Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons

To support ground forces in the occupation of Leyte as directed by CTF 77.

(b) TF 71

(c) TF 72

While continuing present missions to the fullest to conduct strong offensive and reconnaissance patrols and lifeguard operations in the approaches to Allied movement routes and in the approaches to the objective area as directed by COMSEVENTHFLT. In general, to interdict and report enemy surface forces in the approaches to Allied movement routes and objective area.\*\*

(d) TF 73

To conduct supporting operations in the occupation of Leyte under control of Commander Allied Air Force.\*\*

(3) Discussion

(a) The Motor Torpedo Boats were capable of accomplishing their assigned tasks.

(b) The submarines were insufficient in number to accomplish all of their assigned objectives, of which the reporting and destruction of enemy naval forces was paramount. To accomplish the latter objective in adequate measure it was necessary to station the submarines in intercepting positions in adequate strength. This was not done. Instead, Linapacan and Mindoro Straits and Verde Island Passage were given no coverage whatsoever, thus leaving the western entrances to the Sulu and Celebes Seas improperly covered. In addition, no coverage was provided for the Lingga-Singapore area and none was provided for the Hainan-Luzon area. There were sufficient submarines to have accomplished the blocking

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\* Units attached TG 70.2 (anti-submarine group) V-12, 1 AVP, 3 PF, 4 PBV (VPB-11) are included here.

\*\* Commander Allied Naval Forces SOWESPAC Operation Plan 12-44, September 25th, 1944.

of the western entrances to the Sulu and Celebes Seas, to have covered the approaches from Lingga-Singapore and to have covered Makassar Strait provided that anti-shipping patrols were reduced to a minimum and provided that the Hainan-Luzon patrols were omitted.

(c) The land and tender-based aircraft of the SEVENTH Fleet were capable of accomplishing their assigned tasks.

(c) Commander Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC (as of 0719, October 17th)

(1) Composition of Forces

(a) FIFTH Air Force

Total aircraft (Table 1) 1356

(b) THIRTEENTH Air Force

Total aircraft (Table 2) 352

(c) Northern Solomons

Total aircraft (Table 3) 530

(d) RAAF Command

Total aircraft (Table 4) 564

(e) Total

2802

(2) Tasks Assigned\*

(a) To support the operation by:

(1) Providing aerial reconnaissance and photography as required.

(2) Neutralizing, in coordination with carrier and land-based aircraft of the THIRD Fleet, hostile naval and air forces in areas within range in the Philippine Archipelago, intensifying the neutralization in the western Visayas and Mindanao areas from D-9 day to cover the movement of naval forces, the landing and subsequent operations.

(3) Providing protection of convoys and naval forces and direct support of the landing and subsequent operations within capabilities and as requested by Commander Allied Naval Forces.

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\* COMSOWESPAC Operations Instructions Number 70, September 21st, 1944.



(4) Assuming the mission of direct support of the operations in the Leyte-Samar area at the earliest practicable date after the establishment of fighters and light bombers in the Leyte area, as arranged with the Commander Allied Naval Forces.

(b) To destroy hostile naval and air forces and shipping in the Arafura and Celebes Sea areas in northeastern Borneo and the Sulu Archipelago at the earliest practicable date; and to deny the use of naval facilities in the Sulu Archipelago to the Japanese and to protect the western flank of the operation.

(c) To destroy hostile installations and sources of war materials in eastern Netherlands East Indies.

(3) Discussion

Allied land-based aircraft, while sufficient in number and in quality to accomplish many of the assigned objectives, was unable to do so completely because its air bases during the early phases were too far removed from the western Visayas and Mindanao to permit neutralization of those areas and too far from Leyte to permit direct support of the landing and subsequent operations. These responsibilities fell completely upon carrier-based aircraft.

(d) CINCPAC-CINCPOA (as of 0719, October 17th)

(1) Composition of Forces

(a) Western Pacific Task Forces

(1) THIRD Fleet

(a) TF 38 (Fast Carrier Force)

(1) TG 38.1

WASP (53 VF, 25 VB, 18 VT)	
HORNET (54 VF, 24 VB, 18 VT)	2 CV
MONTEREY (24 VF, 9 VT)	1 CVL
Total aircraft 131 VF, 49 VB, 45 VT -	225
CHESTER, PENSACOLA, SALT LAKE CITY	3 CA
SAN DIEGO, OAKLAND	2 CLAA
IZARD, CONNER, BROWN, MARSHALL, McCALLA, WOODWORTH, DUNLAP, CUMMINGS, CASE, CASSIN, DOWNES, FANNING	12 DD

(2) TG 38.2

INTREPID (54 VF, 24 VB, 18 VT)  
 HANCOCK (54 VF, 24 VB, 18 VT)  
 BUNKER HILL (54 VF, 24 VB, 18 VT) 3 CV  
 INDEPENDENCE (15 VF, 8 VT) 1 CVL  
 Total aircraft 177 VF, 72 VB, 62 VT - 311

IOWA, NEW JERSEY 2 BB  
 VICENNES, MIAMI 2 CL  
 TINGEY, HICKOX, HUNT, LEWIS  
 HANCOCK, CUSHING, COLAHAN,  
 HALSEY POWELL, UHLMANN,  
 BENHAM, YARNALL, STOCKHAM,  
 WEDDERBURN, TWINING 13 DD

(3) TG 38.3

LEXINGTON (40 VF, 30 VB, 18 VT)  
 ESSEX (53 VF, 24 VB, 16 VT) 2 CV  
 PRINCETON (23 VF, 9 VT)  
 LANGLEY (24 VF, 9 VT) 2 CVL  
 Total aircraft 140 VF, 54 VB, 52 VT - 246

WASHINGTON, SOUTH DAKOTA,  
 MASSACHUSETTS, ALABAMA 4 BB  
 RENO 1 CLAA  
 CLARENCE K. BRONSON, COTTON,  
 DORTCH, GATLING, HEALY,  
 PORTERFIELD, CALLAGHAN,  
 CASSIN YOUNG, IRWIN, PRESTON,  
 LAWS, LONGSHAW, MORRISON 13 DD

(4) TG 38.4

FRANKLIN (37 VF, 28 VB, 18 VT)  
 ENTERPRISE (53 VF, 22 VB, 18 VT) 2 CV  
 BELLEAU WOOD (24 VF, 10 VT)  
 SAN JACINTO (23 VF, 9 VT) 2 CVL  
 Total aircraft 137 VF, 50 VB, 55 VT - 242

NEW ORLEANS 1 CA  
 BILOXI 1 CL  
 MAURY, GRIDLEY, HELM, McCALL,  
 MUGFORD, RALPH TALBOT, PATTERSON,  
 BAGLEY, WILKES, NICHOLSON, SWANSON 11 DD



(b) TG 30.3

CABOT (23 VF, 9 VT)	
COWPENS (23 VF, 9 VT)	2 CVL
Total aircraft 46 VF, 18 VT	64

BOSTON, WICHITA	2 CA
HOUSTON (PAWNEE towing)	1 CL
CANBERRA (MUNSEE towing)	1 CA
SANTA FE, BIRMINGHAM, MOBILE	3 CL
BOYD, COWELL, GRAYSON, THE SULLIVANS, STEPHEN POTTER, BURNS, BELL, CHARRETTE, MILLER, KNAPP, COGSWELL, CAPERTON, INGERSOLL	13 DD

(c) TG 30.5 (Search, Reconnaissance and  
Photograph Command)

Total aircraft (Table 7)	196
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POCOMOKE, KENNETH WHITING, CHANDELEUR, HAMLIN	4 AV
ONSLow, MAKINAC, COOS BAY, SHELIKOF, CASCO, YAKUTAT	6 AVP

(2) TF 59 (Shore-Based Air Force, Forward Area  
CENPAC)

Total aircraft (Table 6)	455
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(b) TF 17 (Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet)

(1) On Patrol

(a) CONVOY COLLEGE

SAILFISH, SEADRAGON, SNOOK, SAWFISH, PARCHE, SHARK, DRUM, BLACKFISH, COBIA, ICEFISH	10 SS
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(b) NE and NW Formosa

TANG, SILVERSIDES, TRIGGER, SALMON	4 SS
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(c) MARU MORGUE

BURRFISH, BARBEL, STERLET, SAURY, SKATE, SEA DOG	6 SS
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(d) Nagasaki - Sasebo	
PERCH, ESCOLAR, CROAKER	3 SS
(e) HIT PARADE	
BESUGO, RONQUIL, GREENLING, GABILAN, TAMBOR	5 SS
(f) POLAR CIRCUIT	
TILEFISH, APOGON	2 SS
(g) Truk	
PERMIT	1 SS
(h) DUNKERS DERBY	
SNAPPER, SEA FOX, BILLFISH	3 SS
(2) En route Patrol	
PILOTFISH, KINGFISH, HALIBUT, HADDOCK, BLACKFIN, JALLAO, PINTADO, SEAL, ATULE, SARGO, SCAMP, TUNA, POGY	13 SS
(3) En route Base	
FLYING FISH, GUARDFISH, RAZORBACK, ASPRO, CABRILLA, PIRANHA, TREPANG, SEGUNDO, SEAHORSE, SEA DEVIL, WHALE	<u>11 SS</u>
(4) Total	58 SS

(2) Tasks Assigned

(a) Western Pacific Task Forces

To destroy enemy naval and air forces in or threatening the Philippines area; to protect air and sea communications along the Central Pacific Axis; to maintain and extend unremitting military pressure against Japan; to apply maximum attention to enemy air, ground, and naval forces and merchant shipping; in case opportunity for destruction of major portion of enemy fleet offer or can be created, such destruction becomes the primary task.\*

\* CINCPAC-CINCPOA Operation Plan 8-44, Serial 000851, September 27th, 1944.



(1) THIRD Fleet

To inflict maximum damage on enemy air and surface forces and ground installations on Okinawa, Formosa, Luzon and Visayas in support of KING II Operations. In case opportunity for destruction of major portion of enemy fleet offer or can be created such destruction becomes the primary task.\*

(a) TF 38

To destroy enemy aircraft, ships, aircraft facilities, shipping facilities and enemy defenses in Okinawa, Formosa, Luzon, and Visayas and to provide air and strategic support for landing operations of COMSOWESPAC as directed by Commander Western Pacific Task Forces.\*\*

(b) TG 30.3

To protect CANBERRA and HOUSTON, as well as possible with forces assigned, from any surface and submarine attacks and to move them as rapidly as practicable to Ulithi.\*\*\*

(c) TG 30.5

To conduct long-range searches from the Marianas and from Kossol Passage and to provide air cover for TG 30.3 as it retired to Ulithi.\*\*\*\*

(2) TF 59

To attack enemy forces and bases and to defend Allied bases.\*\*\*\*\*

(b) TF 17 (Submarine Force Pacific Fleet)

To intercept, report and destroy enemy forces approaching the area of operations or retiring therefrom; to provide lifeguard services

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Operation Order 21-44, Dispatch 031600, October 1944.  
\*\* CTF 38 Operation Order 11-44, Serial 00020, October 1st, 1944.  
\*\*\* Action Report COMCRUDIV 13, Report THIRD Fleet Salvage Group, October 13th-17th, 1944, Serial 0086, October 28th, 1944; also Report COMCRUDIV 10 of Salvage of CANBERRA and HOUSTON, Serial 0032, November 30th, 1944.  
\*\*\*\* COMTHIRDFLT Operation Order 21-44 Dispatch 031600, October 1944; also Action Report COMCRUDIV 10, October 2nd-29th, 1944, Serial 0022, October 29th, 1944, pages 2 and 3.  
\*\*\*\*\* COMFWDAREACENPAC Operation Plan 7-44, Serial 001477, October 1st, 1944.

as ordered; to maintain and extend unremitting military pressure against Japan; to apply maximum attrition to enemy air, ground and naval forces; in case opportunity for destruction of major portion of the enemy fleet offer or can be created such destruction becomes the primary task.

### (3) Discussion

#### (a) Western Pacific Task Forces

##### (1) THIRD Fleet

The THIRD Fleet was designed to meet any threat which the Japanese might be able to launch against it. The Allies knew fairly accurately what the probable composition of the Combined Fleet might be and where its principal components were located. It is apparent that TF 38, which was the principal striking force of the THIRD Fleet, was greatly superior to the Japanese surface strength - reportedly in the Lingga-Singapore area - although there were no battleships within TF 38 equal to the MUSASHI and the YAMATO, and it is also apparent that the 1088 carrier-based aircraft within the seventeen carriers of TF 38 greatly outnumbered those within the eleven (excluding the ISE and HYUGA) carriers of the Combined Fleet, reportedly within the Inland Sea. This being so, it is likewise apparent that TF 38 and hence the THIRD Fleet was capable of defeating the Japanese Combined Fleet as it existed at this time.\*

##### (2) TF 59

The shore-based aircraft was in general too far removed from the Leyte area to contribute directly to the landing operations. As has been pointed out earlier, Anguar and Peleliu, which had been recently captured, were within range and operations from these bases, once the air facilities had been installed, would be able to contribute somewhat to the neutralization operations in the Visayas.

##### (b) TF 17

The submarines were adequate in number and in quality to accomplish their assigned objectives of which the reporting and destruction of enemy naval forces was paramount. However, to accomplish such an objective in adequate measure it was necessary to station the submarines in intercepting positions in adequate strength. This was not done. Instead, the submarines were stationed thinly along the Empire - Nansei Shoto - Formosa - northern Luzon line, with the destruction of merchant shipping as a primary objective. Had larger numbers of TF 17 submarines been stationed thickly in HIT PARADE rather than in MARU MORGUE and CONVOY COLLEGE, perhaps the accomplishment of the basic objectives would have been facilitated.

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\* Operations in the Pacific Ocean Area, October 1944, prepared by CINCPAC-CINCPOA, May 31st, 1945, page 55.



(e) China-Burma-India Theater (as of 0719, October 17th)

(1) Composition of Forces

(a) FOURTEENTH Air Force

Total aircraft (Table 8) 236

(b) TWENTIETH Bomber Command

(Under Joint Chiefs of Staff)

Total aircraft (Table 9) 140

(c) Total 376

(2) Tasks Assigned

(a) FOURTEENTH Air Force

To support the operations of COMSOWESPAC by (a) reconnaissance of the South China Sea\* and (b) by attacking hostile air installations within 1000 miles of Kunming, including Hong Kong, Hainan, and the Gulf of Tonkin.\*\*

(b) TWENTIETH Bomber Command

To support the KING II Operation by exerting maximum effort against enemy air forces based on Formosa.\*\*\*

(3) Discussion

(a) The FOURTEENTH Air Force, because of lack of bases and logistic difficulties, was unable to provide effective direct support to KING II, other than limited reconnaissance of the South China Sea, and limited attacks against shipping and port facilities along the coast of China. Moreover, the aircraft available to support the Leyte operation were limited to but four air groups (236 aircraft out of a total of 512), because of the necessity to carry out the primary task of supporting Chinese ground operations against the southward drive of the Japanese

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\* CINCPAC Dispatch 151230, October 1944 to COMNAVGRPCHINA.

\*\* Letter, 5AC/GCC/jcr/NR, November 8th, 1950, from Chief, Historical Division, Air University to President, Naval War College, page 11 of Enclosure, AAF Operations from China Bases in Support of Leyte Operation.

\*\*\* CINCPAC Dispatch 150651, October 1944 to Deputy Commander, 20th, Air Force.

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land forces taking place at this time.

(b) The full strength (140 - B-29's) of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command was diverted from its mission against occupied China and Japan to lend support to the Leyte Campaign, on orders from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Unlike the aircraft of the FOURTEENTH Air Force, the B-29's had the necessary range to reach targets in Formosa from their bases in central China, and were more fully capable of accomplishing their assigned tasks.

(h) ALLIED PLAN

As has been pointed out in the INTRODUCTION, the original Allied Plan, prior to moving into the Philippines, called for the completion (a) by CINCPQA of STALEMATE II which involved the capture of Peleliu, Angaur, Ulithi and Yap, and (b) by COMSOWESPAC of INTERLUDE which involved the capture of Morotai and of GOSSIPMONGER, which involved the capture of Talaud.

However, upon the highly successful operations of COMTHIRDFLT against the central Philippines on September 12th and 13th wherein he discovered a lack of organized and effective Japanese air opposition, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on September 15th, after recommendations thereon had been received from CINCPQA and COMSOWESPAC decided to abandon the capture of Yap by CINCPQA, and of Talaud by COMSOWESPAC, and to proceed directly with KING II. Meanwhile, COMSOWESPAC, on September 15th, captured Morotai. CINCPQA, on the same day, in execution of Phase I of STALEMATE II, commenced operations for the capture of Peleliu. He captured Angaur on September 20th. COMTHIRDFLT, on September 23rd, captured Ulithi.

The KING II Operations visualized a major amphibious assault from Hollandia and Manus to seize the group of hostile airdromes and potential base sites on the east coast of Leyte Island. Landings were to be made in the Tacloban and Dulag areas. Initial lodgment was to be followed by the introduction of light naval forces into Visayan waters via San Juanico and Panaon Straits, the seizure of control of Surigao Strait, the consolidation of western Samar and Leyte, and the establishment of necessary base facilities in the Leyte Gulf area for support of subsequent SOWESPAC operations in the Philippines.

The reason for choosing the east coast of Leyte was that it offered certain obvious advantages for amphibious landings. It had a free undefended approach from the east, sufficient anchorage area, and good access to the remainder of the central islands in that it commanded the approaches to Surigao Strait. Moreover, the position by-passed and isolated large Japanese forces in Mindanao. The accelerated timing of the operation and choice of the east coast for landing required, however, the acceptance of one serious disadvantage -- the rainy season. Most of the islands in the Philippines are mountainous and during the northeast monsoon, from October

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to March, land areas on the east sides of the mountains have torrential rains.\*

The plan was simple. It called for the transportation, by SEVENTH Fleet amphibious lift, to the Leyte area (a) of the TENTH Corps (FIRST Cavalry Division and TWENTY-FOURTH Infantry Division) and its landing in the Tacloban area, and (b) of the TWENTY-FOURTH Corps (SEVENTH Infantry Division and NINETY-SIXTH Infantry Division) and its landing in the Dulag area and (c) of the TWENTY-FIRST Regimental Combat Team which was to seize control of the Panaon Strait area -- all on D day, October 20th. It called for transportation also by the SEVENTH Fleet, of the SIXTH Ranger Battalion which was to seize Suluan Island, the northern end of Dinagat Island, and the southern end of Homonhon Island, commencing D-3 day.

The movement of these forces to the Leyte area called principally for preliminary covering operations (a) by the Commander Western Pacific Task Forces (composed mainly of the THIRD Fleet, including carrier, land, and tender-based aircraft) against the Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, commencing on October 10th for the purpose of destroying enemy aircraft, ships, aircraft facilities, shipping facilities and defenses, (b) by the CG, FOURTEENTH Air Force, under the operational control of CG, U.S. Army Forces in the CBI, against shipping and enemy airfields in the Formosa and Luzon areas, (c) by CG, TWENTIETH Bomber Command under the operational control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, against enemy installations on Formosa, in coordination with carrier strikes of the THIRD Fleet, (d) by Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet, and by Commander Submarines SOWESPAC against merchant and combat shipping and for the purpose of obtaining intelligence concerning enemy forces.

As has been discussed in previous pages, the covering operations by the THIRD Fleet against Nansei Shoto and Formosa as of 0719, October 17th had been very successfully completed, those against Luzon had been scarcely started, and those against the Visayas had not as yet been attempted. Submarine operations up to this time had been singularly unproductive. The operations of the FOURTEENTH Air Force had not been very successful because range limitations from available bases in East China restricted most of these operations to the coastal areas of China and to reconnaissance over the South China Sea. However, attacks on Formosa by the TWENTIETH Bomber Command from China bases had been successful.

The plan now called for the execution of the succeeding phase, i.e., the seizure of Suluan Island, the sweeping of Leyte Gulf for mines, the seizure of the northern end of Dinagat Island, the southern end of

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\* U.S. Navy at War 1941-1945, Official Report by Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, USN, page 117.



Homonhon Island, the landing of the troops in the Tacloban and Dulag areas, the gaining of control of the Panaon Strait area, and, finally, the establishment of base facilities, notably air facilities ashore on Leyte Island. This plan, on the basis of what was then known and the best current estimates, was sound since:

(a) As a consequence of the above covering operations the Allies knew that Japanese land-based aircraft was not only ineffective against the planes of TF 38, but had suffered very heavy losses. They also knew that Allied carrier-based air power was even stronger now, in the Philippine-Formosa area, than it had been on October 10th since it had been reinforced by the planes of TF 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group), and thus should be much superior to Japanese land-based air power.

(b) The Allies estimated that they would be opposed by about 18,000 men in the Leyte area of which 4,000 were reported at Tacloban and 5,000 at Dulag. Since they were landing in the first four days about 148,000 men (55,000 XXIVth Corps, 93,000 Xth Corps)\* they had reason to believe that they were vastly superior in ground troops.

(c) Finally, they continued to estimate that the Japanese Fleet would not oppose the landings.\*\* However, they estimated that, even if they did, the Allied surface forces would be very superior in numbers and quality. They estimated as follows:

	<u>Allied</u>	<u>Japanese***</u>
BB	12	9 (including HYUGA and ISE)
CV	9	6
CVL	8	5
CVE	18	4
CA	11****	15
CL	15	10
DD	149	40

They had reason to believe also that whereas the Allied surface power which was somewhat dispersed could, in general, be readily concentrated, the Japanese power was widely separated between the Empire and Lingga-Singapore making concentration very difficult indeed.

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\* XXIV Corps After Action Report Leyte, page 34; also Action Report CTF 78 Leyte operation, Serial 00911, November 10th, 1944, page 5.

\*\* General Headquarters SOWESPAC, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, Intelligence Summary No. 20, Periods Summary of Enemy Trends, October 21st, 1944.

\*\*\* Adjustment between CANFSOWESPAC Operation Plan 13-44, Serial 00022A, September 26th, 1944, Annex M and Operations in the Pacific Ocean Area, October 1944, prepared by CINCPAC-CINCPOA, May 31st, 1945, page 55.

\*\*\*\* HOUSTON and CANBERRA omitted, damaged.



## CHAPTER III\*

(a) JAPANESE COMMAND RELATIONS

## (1) General Discussion

The Japanese system of command was radically different from that employed by the Allies. There were, for example, naval area commands such as the Southwest Area, which were under the command of the Commander-in-Chief, Combined Fleet, but the naval officer in command of such an area only had command of the naval forces, both sea and air, in his area and, except in special instances, did not have command of any army ground forces there. On occasions as provided by joint agreements he did command certain army air force units in his area. There were also area army commands such as the Southern Army where the army commander had command of army ground and air forces in his area but did not have command of the sea forces. On occasions, as will be shown later, he did command certain units of the naval air forces as well as the naval base forces in his area.

The army areas and the naval areas were not bounded by the same geographical boundaries, but were instead entirely separate, although a naval area might be within an army area. The naval Southwest Area, for example, was within the army Southern Area. The result of this was that there was no over-all unified command in any area. This was in contrast with the Allied system of command wherein a theater commander such as COMSOWESPAAC or CINCPAC commanded, in general, all forces of whatever service assigned to his area.

## (2) Chain of Command

## (a) General

The Japanese chain of command was, theoretically, the Emperor, assisted by two consultative bodies, viz., the Supreme War Council and the Board of Field Marshals and Fleet Admirals; the Imperial General

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\* The time of receipt of many Japanese dispatches has been generally unavailable to this analysis. Often the time of receipt is known for one command but is not known for other commands. In order to compensate for this, it has been assumed from an average time of receipt of a number of important dispatches that, unless otherwise stated, important dispatches concerning operations were received by action addressees in one half hour. Such assumed times of receipt are indicated by the phrase "at about." While this assumption may seem somewhat generous, a study of this analysis will show that the result of later receipt (such as one hour or more) would have caused little or no change in the basic study.



Headquarters; and thence (a) for the Navy, from the Naval Section of the Imperial Headquarters to the Naval General Staff and thence to the CinC, Combined Fleet, and (b) for the Army, from the Army Section of the Imperial General Headquarters to the Army General Staff and thence to field commanders.

Practically however, the chain of command, insofar as the Battle for Leyte Gulf was concerned, was from the Imperial General Headquarters, which controlled all military and naval operations, to the CinC, Combined Fleet, and field commanders of the Army.

Although apparently an organ of unified command the Imperial General Headquarters was not so in fact. It was compartmented into Army and Navy Sections, which were headed respectively by the Chiefs of the Army and Navy General Staffs. The sections were manned chiefly by Army and Navy General Staff personnel, augmented by personnel from other Government organs, such as the naval and war ministries. Each section was fully competent to prepare plans and issue orders and directives to its own service in all matters pertaining only to its service. In cases involving both services, such as the SHO Operations, joint plans were evolved by the staffs of the two sections in cooperation. It is important to note however, that the basic orders and directives prepared from the joint plans mentioned above, were disseminated to the operational commands of the Army and Navy, by the heads of the two sections, independently, and in their capacities as chiefs of General Staffs. Thus the chain of command during the Battle for Leyte Gulf, was (a) from the Navy Section of Imperial General Headquarters to CinC, Combined Fleet, transmitting orders and directives of a joint Army-Navy nature, and orders and directives of a purely Navy character, and (b) from the Army Section of Imperial General Headquarters to the CinC Southern Army transmitting orders and directives of a joint Army-Navy nature and orders and directives of a purely Army character.

It would appear from the foregoing that the Army and Navy General Staffs, in this command arrangement, were being by-passed, but such was not the case, for the senior members of the Army and Navy Sections were also the senior members of their respective General Staffs and transmitted all orders evolved from General Headquarters planning and decisions to their respective services, in their capacity of Chief of their General Staff.

Since this study of the Battle for Leyte Gulf is primarily one relating to the operations of Japanese sea and air forces, discussion of the Army chain of command will be limited, in the future, to those occasions when such discussion is necessary for clarification.

#### (b) Naval Chain of Command

Japanese naval units were organized both administratively and tactically. Generally, the title of an administrative command was



"Fleet" while that of the tactical command was "Force." Thus, under CinC, Combined Fleet's order "Allocation of Forces" dated August 1st, 1944, the SECOND Fleet became tactically the FIRST Striking Force, the FIRST Air Fleet became tactically the FIFTH Base Air Force and the EIGHTH Fleet became tactically the Outer South Seas Force. The only exception to this was the Combined Fleet which was both an administrative and tactical title. This analysis will generally use the tactical designation of forces, and, where desirable, the administrative designation will be indicated in parenthesis.

All of the Japanese naval forces, including the base air forces but excepting the China Area Fleet, the Naval District and Guard Forces, and the Surface Escort Forces were under the command of the Commander-in-Chief, Combined Fleet. The Combined Fleet consisted (a) of the mobile forces including submarines which could operate in any area (b) of the localized area forces which were responsible for and restricted to certain geographical areas, and (c) of the base air forces. The mobile forces constituted the main striking forces of the Combined Fleet. The area forces were normally defensive in character and were generally unable to take any strong offensive action without assistance from the mobile forces.\* The base air forces included naval land-based air units and carrier air groups when they operated from shore-bases.

Plate "XII" shows the chain of command within the Combined Fleet as of August 10th as established for the SHO Operations. This chain of command remained constant until October 18th when some modifications were made. This plate therefore, depicts the command structure which existed at 0719, October 17th.

It will be noted that CinC, Combined Fleet exercised direct command over (a) the Mobile Force, consisting of the FIRST (SECOND Fleet) Striking Force, the SECOND (FIFTH Fleet) Striking Force, and the Main Force (THIRD Fleet) with its carriers and air groups, (b) two base air forces, the SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces (SECOND and THIRD Air Fleets), (c) Inner South Seas Force consisting of the remnants of the FOURTH Fleet plus the attached Base Forces, (d) Advance Expeditionary Force (SIXTH Fleet, composed of submarines) and (e) the THIRTY-FIRST Army, which was composed of the Japanese Army Forces in the Bonins, Marianas and western Carolines. In addition, after August 21st, CinC, Combined Fleet had full operational control over the Surface Escort Forces, Naval District Guard Forces, and the China Area Fleet insofar as the SHO Operations were concerned.\*\* It is of interest that certain of the base air forces included Army air units attached to them for operations. In this connection it should be pointed

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\* Japanese Naval Organization ONI 49, January 1944.

\*\* Naval General Staff Directives No. 33, August 9th and No. 35, August 21st, 1944, SCAP/ATIS Document 14016A and 14016B.



out that CinC, Combined Fleet in his order\* allocating forces and tasks to his command advised his commanders among other things, as follows:

- (1) "Depending upon the situation the FIRST and SECOND Striking Forces may be placed under the direct command of CinC, Combined Fleet." This was done on October 20th, when CinC, Combined Fleet assumed command of the FIRST Striking Force.
  - (2) "The commanders of all forces will cooperate in effecting the transport of the FIFTH, SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces. The Commander Southwest Area Force will cooperate in the transfer of the Inner South Seas Area Force and of the THIRTY-FIRST Army."
  - (3) "The commanders of all forces will cooperate in the protection of sea communications and A/S operations with the Commanders Surface Escort Force, China Area Fleet, and Naval Bases and Guard Districts."
  - (4) "The commanders of carrier air groups operating from land bases will endeavor to conform to the air combat regulations prescribed for land-based air forces in the SHO Operations."
- (3) Coordination between Army Air Force and land-based Naval Air Forces
- (a) Basic Agreement

Although there appear to have been no written agreements concerning the coordination of the Army ground forces and the Naval sea and carrier-based air forces, there was a basic agreement covering land-based aircraft of both services.\*\* This basic agreement provided for lower command level agreements to be concluded, among others, between CinC, Combined Fleet and General Defense Command and between CinC, Combined Fleet and CinC, Southern Army. The latter agreement was effected, as will be pointed out later, between the local representatives, i.e., CG, FOURTH Air Army and Commander FIFTH Base Air Force. The basic agreement also provided that both air forces would by a "concerted

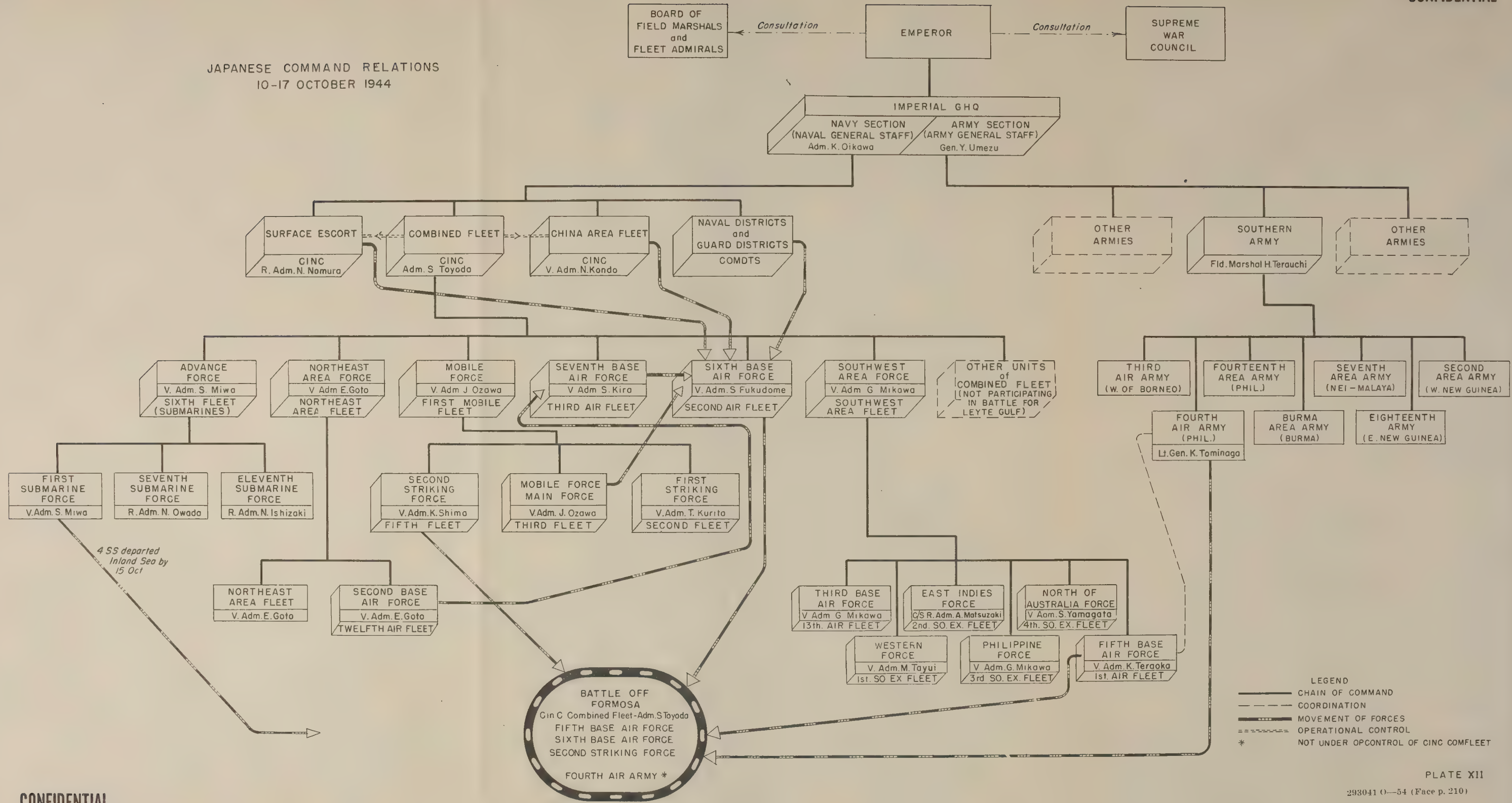
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\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 84, August 1st, 1944, ATIS Japanese Document 18524, also Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO air operations concluded July 24th, 1944, Supplement to Imperial General Headquarters Navy Section Directive 435, July 26th, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).



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utilization of forces" destroy the enemy. Insofar as the Philippines, Nansei Shoto and Formosa were concerned, it further provided that overall command of and responsibility for air operations in these areas was vested in:

(1) Nansei Shoto and Formosa: Navy

(2) Philippines: Joint Army-Navy

In this latter case it provided that (1) when the primary emphasis was on sea operations, that portion of Army (FOURTH Air Army) Air Units assigned to sea attack operations would be under the tactical command of the Navy (Commander FIFTH Base Air Force) and (2) when the primary emphasis was on land operations that portion of the FIFTH Base Air Force required to support the Army would be under the tactical command of the CG, FOURTH Air Army. The agreement also provided that the principal tasks of the Army and Navy Air Forces in the Philippines up to the time of decisive battle were (a) Naval Air Forces: Long-range patrol, (b) Army Air Forces: Air operations in the area north of Australia, i.e., Halmahera, western New Guinea, etc.

This agreement also provided for the joint utilization of certain bases which were specifically designated within the Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippines and further provided that the flexible use of bases by both services would be sought beyond the scope of this agreement as the situation demanded.

It was quite complete in many respects and seems to have covered most of those points necessary to obtain the maximum effective effort of the Army and Navy Air Forces within the Philippines or at Formosa. However, the agreement is lacking in several important particulars.

(1) It does not state who determined when the primary emphasis was to be changed from sea operations to land operations. Why this is so is not clear, for a lack of clear-cut definition of command can, and often does, have a highly disruptive effect on the conduct of military operations. All the available evidence points to the conclusion that shifts of Army aircraft to Navy tactical command, and vice-versa, were to be decided by mutual agreement between the interested commanders in the area - Commander FOURTH Air Army and Commander FIFTH or SIXTH Base Air Forces.

(2) It does not state the method of coordinating the air forces on Formosa with those in the Philippines. Since there was no coordination compact in this agreement and since no coordination compacts of any nature have been located, it would appear that any action taken by the air commander in one area in support of the other area was to be purely cooperative with all of the uncertainty which that entails.

(b) Implementing Agreement

In accordance with the provisions of the Central Agreement the two local air commanders in the Philippines (Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and CG, FOURTH Air Army) concluded an implementing agreement under which the FIFTH Base Air Force appears to have assumed primary responsibility for over water air patrol, and attacks on enemy task forces, while the FOURTH Air Army assumed primary responsibility for attacks on enemy transports. COMTHIRDFLT's air attacks during September demonstrated the inadequacy of this agreement, so a new agreement specifically providing for joint action against enemy air attack prior to the activation of SHO was prepared.\* This new local agreement which was in much more detail than the basic agreement and evidently more in detail than the local agreement which it superseded provided that:

(1) Patrols

(a) Long-range patrols were to be accomplished by the Navy.

(b) Short-range patrols were to be accomplished by designated Army and Navy units, each in its assigned sectors.

(2) Search

Searches were to be conducted in the same manner as patrols.

(3) Contact Scouting

(a) Day contact scouting was to be accomplished by designated Army and Navy units, each in its assigned sectors.

(b) Night contact scouting was to be accomplished by designated Army units in sectors to be assigned as demanded by the situation.

(4) Attacks

Both surprise attacks and general offensive attacks were to be made. These attacks were to employ as necessary all naval aircraft of the FIFTH Base Air Force based in the Philippines and most of the Army fighter strength and some of its bomber strength, based in the Philippines.

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\* Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, Staff Officer, FOURTH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7, Agreement probably made late summer 1944.



## (4) Summation

The Japanese command organization, based on Allied concepts, was poor with the possible exception of Army and Naval land-based air, but even here the command relationship was not fully defined. In the Japanese organization all major decisions on basic policy were made in Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo which was 1700 miles from Manila; the control of all naval operations remained in CinC, Combined Fleet's Headquarters at Hiyoshi in the Tokyo area; the control of the Southern Army operations was in the Southern Army Headquarters in Manila. With radio communications the distance between Tokyo and the Philippines might seem unimportant, but when the numerous difficulties\* inherent in long-range radio communications are considered this on occasions could prove disastrous. Also, Allied experience has shown that it is important that the commander be within easy range of the combat area in order that he may personally consult with his own commanders and see for himself the morale of his troops and the nature of the warfare being waged. In the Korean War of 1950-53, this was clearly shown by the frequency of the visits of the Allied commander in Tokyo (CinC, United Nations Command) to the battle front. He did this because he found his distance from the battle front too restrictive. The difficulty of exercising command from long distances was also shown at the Battle of Midway where CINCPAC in view of his distance (1150 miles) from Midway Island was unable to maintain adequately the coordination necessary between his carrier forces, his submarines and his land-based aircraft at Midway. It was for similar reasons that the Joint Chiefs of Staff established theaters in the Pacific Ocean during World War II notably, POA, SOWESPAC and SOPAC. Does it not appear that it would have been wiser had the Japanese established a Philippine theater (SHO One was the defense of the Philippines) with headquarters on Luzon, wherein the theater commander had full operating control of all ground forces, of all air forces, both Army and Navy within the theater, and of certain naval forces, mostly escort, which might be assigned to the theater? And is it not clear that should such a theater have been set up there should at the very least have been provided in augmentation a coordination agreement wherein the theater commander and CinC, Combined Fleet coordinated their operations to obtain the maximum results? It seems possible that such an agreement, couched in rather general terms, may have existed between CG, Southern Army and CinC, Combined Fleet, but if so, it has not as yet been located.

Perhaps, based on Japanese concepts, the organization actually provided was the best that could have been obtained under the circumstances. The Japanese Army and Navy had often been widely apart in their strategic thinking and their commanders were unwilling to place the command of major ground or naval surface forces of one service under the direct command of the other service. They preferred to retain the operational command within the CinC, Combined Fleet in the Tokyo area and within CG, Southern Army in Manila and to conduct operations from these headquarters.

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\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 75, Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Admiral Soemu Toyoda, IJN, Vol II, page 316.



(b) INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE JAPANESE COMMANDER

(1) He believed that the Allies would employ elements of, or a major part of, their carrier task forces to carry out bombing attacks on key cities in Japan proper and on strategic sectors of southern Kyushu, Formosa and the Philippines in order to lower Japanese economic production, to cause unrest among the Japanese people, and to destroy the Japanese air strength.\*

While this estimate was exaggerated it was, in general, correct.

(2) He believed that at an opportune time the Allies would launch invasion operations against strategic sectors of the southern Philippines and might, at the same time, launch invasion operations against strategic sectors of the central and northern Philippines should the counter air action by Japanese land-based aircraft prior to invasion prove ineffective.\*

This estimate was reasonably correct, but erred in that the Allied landings occurred in the central rather than in the southern Philippines. It was in line with the Allied original plan which called for seizure of Yap and Talaud, but this plan was changed on September 15th because the Allies had discovered that the Japanese were militarily weak in the Leyte area.

(3) He believed that, prior to launching invasion operations, the Allies would employ the major part of their carrier-based aircraft in an attempt to destroy the Japanese air strength in southern Kyushu, Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippines.\*

This was a correct estimate and shows that the Japanese had an excellent appreciation of Allied strategy.

(4) He believed that the Allies would increase their submarine activities in order to prevent the Japanese from deploying their combat strength to the Philippines.\*

This estimate was incorrect in that the Allies did not actually increase their submarine activities to any noticeable extent. Instead they maintained them at the high level at which they had been operating. They did however, employ some of their submarines in support of direct military operations and therefore reduced somewhat the number operating against merchant shipping during these times.

(5) He anticipated that the Allies would endeavor to land in the Philippines area (including the Sulu Sea) during or after the last ten days of

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\* Situation Estimate at start of the Allied Invasion of Palau and Halmahera, September 17th, 1944, Combined Fleet Headquarters, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-26, Item B.



October and therefore directed that operational preparations for SHO One were to be completed with first priority.\*

This was a very correct estimate as the Allies landed in strength at Leyte on October 20th. While the term "Philippine area" was all-inclusive and did not specify the exact landing area, nevertheless it shows that the Japanese High Command was definitely alerted to an Allied landing in the Philippines as early as late October.

(6) He had information that certain of the enemy carrier task forces were in the Marianas\*\* and that the amphibious forces were in the Hollandia-Wakde area.\*\*\*

This was only partially correct. The carrier task forces were normally at Ulithi, and the principal amphibious forces were normally at Manus, although the amphibious reinforcement groups were in the Hollandia-Wakde area.

The Japanese belief that the carriers were in the Marianas appears to have been based on the fact that TG 38.2 had been reported there by friendly sources. This task group had loaded ammunition at Saipan from 0602, September 28th to 1641, September 29th and had then gone to Ulithi.\*\*\*\* That the Japanese had an interest in Ulithi seems clear for on October 7th the Japanese submarine RO46 was directed to reconnoiter this base and reported one carrier, several cruisers, ten destroyers, and thirteen transports.\*\*\* The carrier was the BUNKER HILL, the cruisers were the RENO and BIRMINGHAM which had been left behind to complete ammunition replenishment when the carrier task groups had sortied the previous day. The Japanese were unfortunate here, for had the RO46 arrived one day earlier, she would have observed TG's 38.2 and 38.3 sorting to the westward and would possibly have estimated (a) that Ulithi was an important carrier base, and (b) that the anticipated Allied air attacks against the Japanese defense line - Kyushu, Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Philippines - were about to start.

It seems surprising that the Japanese did not appreciate the importance of Manus at this time. This base, which had been in Allied hands since its capture in February 29th, had been built into a great

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\* Imperial Headquarters (Navy Directive) 462, September 21st, 1944, Dispatch 220929, September 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 021021, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161437; also Commander Sasebo Naval District Dispatch 032021, October 1944 to all units Sasebo Naval District, WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates First Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\*\*\* War Diary BUNKER HILL, October 28th and 29th, 1944.



repair, supply and staging base by the Allies, and yet prior to October 9th there is but one reference to it, and that indirect, in all of the Japanese information available to this study. This reference, dated September 1st, merely stated that it was believed that an element of the enemy surface fleet would be in the vicinity of the Admiralty Islands around that time,\* but it made no reference whatsoever to Manus. Does it not seem strange that, at this vital time when an invasion was expected, the Japanese failed to reconnoiter, at least by submarines, some of the islands which the Allies had seized as stepping stones? Twenty-seven submarines were operational in the Empire.\*\* Was it not highly probable that such bases were of strategic importance to the Allied advance else they would not have been seized?

(7) He believed that the Allied carrier task forces which were in the Marianas would soon commence operations against Kyushu, the Nansei Shoto, and Formosa. For this reason, commencing October 4th and continuing indefinitely, the Commander SIXTH Base Air Force alerted his command from two hours before sunrise until 1200 noon (the time his patrol aircraft reached their limits of search). It was also for this reason that the Commander Sasebo Naval District on October 3rd tightened the air precautions of the units in the Okinawa area.\*\*\*

This estimate of Allied intentions was correct for COMTHIRDFLT struck the Okinawa area with his carrier-based aircraft on October 10th.

(8) He had information, on October 4th, that the concentrations of enemy strength in the Ulithi area might be complete.\*\*\*\* What the nature of these concentrations was is not explained. It appears doubtful that the Japanese expected the carrier task force(s) to be based there as they repeatedly referred to the "enemy task force in the Marianas." Whether they knew it or not the fact remains that the Allied carrier task force concentrations at Ulithi were, in fact, generally complete on this date. On the following day, October 6th, TG's 38.2 and 38.3, which had resupplied there, sortied to join TG's 38.1 and 38.4 on October 7th to commence the preliminary operations of KING II.

(9) He believed that the enemy had begun to employ the airfields on Peleliu as early as October 2nd. This was correct. However, the field

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\*\* Appendix to Japanese Naval War Diary World War II, April 1st, 1944 - September 2nd, 1945, ATIS Document 16638B.

\*\* Japanese Submarine Operations in Philippine Waters, 1944-1945, Department of the Army Historical Division 8-5, JS-15.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 021021, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161437; also Commander Sasebo Naval District Dispatch 032021, October 1944 to all units Sasebo Naval District, WDC Document 160369. Also Takao Air Base Dispatch 061946, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force.

\*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates First Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).



was usable by small aircraft only and therefore, the planes stationed there at this time were fighters and night fighters which were being employed for local air patrols, air support of the military operations underway, and air defense.\*

(10) He had information that on October 9th in the Hollandia-Wakde area of New Guinea there were six carriers, four battleships, ten cruisers, over twenty destroyers and over 200 large medium and small transports, and that in Biak there were fifty large transports, a large number of medium and small transports and several cruisers and destroyers.\*\*

This information was incorrect as regards combat ships and transports at Wakde and Biak as there was no important naval shipping at either of these bases. It was incorrect as regards large combat ships at Hollandia as there were no battleships nor carriers there. It was reasonably correct at Hollandia as regards small combat ships as there were about forty-eight destroyers, destroyer escorts, frigates and destroyer transports there. It was surprisingly correct at Hollandia as regards transports for, if the Liberty Ships, transports, LST's and service ships are included as transports, there were approximately 187 ships.

(11) He had information that Allied carriers would attack Formosa and that the U.S. FOURTEENTH and TWENTIETH Air Forces based in China would participate by attacking either Formosa, Okinawa or Kyushu\*\*\* or perhaps all three. The record is not clear on this point. (It is of interest that most of this information was obtained from a report by the Australian Minister to Moscow who told the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs there that these attacks were designed to isolate the Philippines).\*\* Although no date was specified, it is assumed that the Japanese expected the attacks during October as the information was dated October 4th. However, CinC, Combined Fleet made no searches to the westward against the China-based attacks. The Japanese information concerning these strikes was in general correct. The THIRD Fleet strikes were to be on October 12th and 13th; the TWENTIETH Bomber Command Strikes on October 11th and 14th. The FOURTEENTH Air Force, owing to logistic difficulties and lack of bases was unable to give the support originally planned.

(12) He believed that the Allied surface ship attack on Marcus Island on October 9th was purely diversionary and employed but limited

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\* War Diary CTF 57, October 1944.

\*\* Material for Situation Estimates First Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\*\* War Diary OROKU Detachment of 901st Air Group Dispatch 032021, October 1944, from Commander Sasebo Naval District, WDC Document 160369.



forces.\* This was a correct analysis.\*\*

(13) He believed that Allied Air Forces were operating from Morotai as of October 3rd. This was almost correct as the Allies had commenced using the Morotai fields on October 4th.

(14) He had information that numerous Allied submarines were in the waters in the vicinity of Kyushu, Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippines since on the morning of October 9th submarines had been reported as follows: one submerged submarine (CROAKER) to the westward of Kyushu,\*\*\* one surfaced submarine (RONQUIL) about 330 miles,\*\*\* one surfaced submarine (GABILAN) about 310 miles\*\*\*\* southwest of Tokyo Bay, and one surfaced submarine (RAZORBACK) about 600 miles almost due east of Garan Bi, Formosa.\*\*\* A number of contacts on submarines were also reported west of Luzon and south of the Philippines (Borneo).\*\*\*\*\*

This information was correct although the number of submarines in all areas were much greater than the above contacts would indicate (Diagram "B"). It is not clear what submarines were contacted west of Luzon and south of the Philippines. Although the location of Allied submarines may be found under the discussion of the Allied side they are restated here by days for reference. Submarines were on station on October 9th as follows:

(a) In the sea areas west of Luzon, six submarines, viz., HOE, about 180 miles almost due west of Cape Bojeador; BONEFISH and LAPON in the vicinity of Cape Bolinao; the FLASHER, about twenty miles west of Palauig Point; and the RAY and COD which, while not together, were both about eighty miles west of Cape Santiago. These submarines, which normally operated submerged at periscope depth, reported having sighted planes on October 8th and 9th, as follows: On October 8th, RAY, one;\*\*\*\*\* on October 9th, FLASHER, seven.\*\*\*\*\* The other submarines made no contacts on these two days.

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\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739 (Microfilm).

\*\* Action Report CTG 30.2 Bombardment of Marcus Island, Serial 0138, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary OROKU Detachment of 901st Air Group Dispatch 091055, October 1944, WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\*\* Commander Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 091801, October 1944 to Designated Ships, WDC Document 161437.

\*\*\*\*\* CofS, SW Area Fleet Dispatch 101554, October 1944 to Flags SW Area contained in War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report RAY, Report of SIXTH War Patrol, Serial 018, December 8th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report FLASHER, Report of FOURTH War Patrol, Serial 021, October 20th, 1944.



(b) In the sea areas due west of Mindoro, three submarines, the BECUNA, CAVALLA and HAWKBILL. These submarines, which were about 150 miles from the west coast of Mindoro, made no contacts on October 8th or 9th.

(c) In the sea areas of the southern Philippines, five submarines. These were the ANGLER in the Mindanao Sea, the BLUEGILL off Guimaras Island in Panay Gulf, the CERO in Sibutu Pass just west of Tawi Tawi; and the DACE and DARTER in Palawan Passage. The CERO sighted one enemy plane on October 8th;\* the DACE two on October 9th.\*\* The other submarines made no contacts on these two days.

(d) In the sea areas south of the Philippines (Borneo) two submarines. These were the HAMMERHEAD, which was in the South China Sea about sixty miles north of Cape Sirik, Borneo and the PADDLE which was forty miles east of Balikpapan Bay in Makassar Strait. The HAMMERHEAD made no contacts on October 8th or 9th; the PADDLE sighted, on October 8th, two planes and on October 9th, five planes.

#### (c) JAPANESE LAND-BASED AIRCRAFT

The air combat regulations for the SHO Operations\*\*\* provided for initially dispersing the effective strength of the base air forces in order to conserve that strength from destruction by Allied pre-landing carrier task force attacks. This strength was to be so conserved until the time of the decisive battle, i.e., the time of the Allied landings. At that time the base air forces were to concentrate and to exert maximum effort in coordination with other forces of the Combined Fleet and the Army to destroy the enemy with emphasis on enemy carriers and transports.

During the period prior to the anticipated decisive battle, the plan provided that the base air forces, while holding most of their strength, would make quick raiding attacks on enemy bases, using only small numbers of aircraft. While resourceful interception of attacking enemy aircraft would be permitted, the basis for Japanese base defense would be radar search, lookouts, and ground fire.

In general, the Japanese plan called for the withdrawal and dispersal of the base air forces in the face of Allied pre-landing air attacks, offering only very minor opposition to such attacks. Then, when the Allied landing force was committed and during the

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\* War Patrol Report CERO, Report of SIXTH War Patrol, no serial, November 25th, 1944.

\*\* War Patrol Report DACE, Report of FIFTH War Patrol, no serial, November 6th, 1944.

\*\*\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).



vulnerable period of the actual landing, the base air forces together with other fleet and Army forces would concentrate and destroy the landing force.

The Japanese plans did provide, under certain circumstances, for deviation from this basic plan. For example, if conditions were such as to render impossible the dispersal of the base air forces or if good results could be achieved with the forces available, an attack could be made immediately with all available forces.\*

How effective this plan of avoiding losses by dispersing prior to the time of the decisive battle might have been cannot be ascertained, for subsequent to October 10th it was not used. However, it should be noted that such a plan required that the base air forces not be surprised in order to have time to disperse and also that, at the later time of concentration and decisive attack, they have sufficient control of the air over their staging base to permit their forward movement and attack.

That there was some doubt that this plan could be effected is evident for on September 18th, 1944, Commander Southern Army at Manila forwarded to Imperial General Headquarters a recommendation that his air strength (FOURTH Air Army) be authorized to strike with full force against enemy carriers rather than attempt to conserve this strength for employment in the later decisive battle against the landing forces.\*\* As a result of the damage inflicted by the THIRD Fleet strikes against the Philippines in September this commander doubted if the conservation plan would be effective in future operations. He based this doubt on a belief that he could not rely on his intelligence to provide timely warning and that his airfield defenses did not appear capable of protecting the air strength he was trying to conserve.\*\*\*

This recommendation was not approved, although the CG, FOURTH Air Army was authorized to conduct small scale attacks on enemy task forces under particularly favorable situations. Possibly, Imperial General Headquarters felt that the eventuality foreseen by Commander Southern Army was sufficiently provided for under the existing concept which permitted attack rather than dispersal under certain conditions previously cited.

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- \* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944, Part I, Essentials for Direction of Air Combat, paragraph B5, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).
  - \*\* Statement of Colonel Yozo Miyama, Staff Officer (Operations) Southern Army, G-2, Historical Section Files, GHQ, FEC.
  - \*\*\* Southern Army Operations 1941-1945; First Demobilization Bureau Monograph File No. 8-5, JS-21.



At the time of the first Allied attack of the Leyte Campaign, the THIRD Fleet attack on Okinawa on October 10th, Japanese land-based aircraft were generally organized along area lines corresponding to the SHO plans. Since in the Battle for Leyte Gulf, Allied attacks were directed solely against the Formosa-Nansei Shoto-southern Kyushu area (SHO Two) and in the Philippine area (SHO One) this study will be concerned with these areas only.

(1) Organization and composition of Japanese air forces in Southern Kyushu, Nansei Shoto, Formosa and Philippines

(a) Formosa, Nansei Shoto, Southern Kyushu Area

In this area there was one major land-based air command. This was SIXTH Base Air Force. The Commander, SIXTH Base Air Force,\* who operated directly under CinC, Combined Fleet, was in the process of shifting his headquarters from Kanoya, southern Kyushu to Takao, Formosa. On October 10th, he commanded all fleet land-based air in the area and exercised operational control over all Army air in that area. There were also based in the area certain other air units which were not under his command at this time, although they had been taken over in August by CinC, Combined Fleet for operational control in connection with the SHO Operations. These were the air elements of the Surface Escort Force and of the Naval Guard Districts, and training air groups. Certain of these, as will be later noted, were placed under his command subsequent to the first Allied attack. There were also in the Inland Sea area carrier air groups. These were not under his command at this time although subsequently some of them did operate under him.

He had organized his command into five subordinate commands.\*\*

(1) Western Attack Force ONE (W1AB) with headquarters at Kanoya. This command embraced all tactical units based in southern Kyushu with the exception of "T" Force units (see below). He took direct command of this attack force.

(2) Western Attack Force TWO (W2AB) with headquarters on Okinawa. This force was commanded by Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla

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\* Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN.

\*\* During the period embraced by this volume, i.e., October 10th to 0719 October 17th, the administrative titles of these commands (such as Commander 51st Air Flotilla) rather than these operational titles will be employed. This is because (a) the confused command organization which resulted from the Allied attacks on the Okinawa, Formosa, Philippines line and (b) the ensuing transfer of numerous planes from different commands to the objective area, made impractical any clear delineation of the operational command functions and responsibilities.

TABLE 11  
SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE  
10 October, 1944

TOTAL AIRCRAFT

	VF	VF(N)	Land Attack	Carrier Attack	Land Bomber	Recco Seaplanes	Recco Landplanes	Recco Flying Boats	Recco Carrier Type	TOTAL	
Kyushu	81	10	32		58	28	34			243	Source: Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN.
Nansei Shoto	15		2	3	13				5	38*	Source: War Diary Commander 25th Air Flotilla
Formosa	58		12							270**	Source: Action Report 708th Attack Unit Detach at Shinchiku
"T" Force	69		58	20	*** 34			5		186	Source: Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN.
TOTALS	223	10	104	23	105	28	34	5	5	737**	

\* Does not include Army aircraft which may have been present on Okinawa. Data available includes no figures on Army aircraft at that base.  
 \*\* Includes 200 Army planes under Commander SIXTH Base Air Force' (USSBS Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN, page 501.  
 \*\*\* Army bombers of 7th and 98th Air Regiments.



TABLE 12  
SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE - REINFORCEMENTS

	VF	VF(N)	Land Attack	Carrier Type Attack	Land Bombers	Carrier Type Bombers	Recco Seaplanes	Recco Landplanes	Recco Flying Boats	Recco Carrier Type	TOTAL	
Under Command of Comdr SIXTH Base Air Force 0700, October 10th.	223	10	104	23	105		28	34	5	5	737	Includes 200 Army planes (Table 11)
Reported to Comdr SIXTH Base Air Force October 10th.* Planes in Formosa	60		47	66			20		12		205	Units: 901st & 953rd Air Groups; 14th Combined Air Group
Reported to Comdr "T" Force, October 10th. Planes arr. Kanoya from Honshu, October 11th.**					30						30	Unit: 501st Attack Unit.
Reported to Comdr SIXTH Base Air Force, October 12th and 13th.*** Planes in Kyushu	97			46		9	20				172	Units: CARDIV's 3 and 4
Reported to Comdr SIXTH Base Air Force, October 13th in Kyushu.****	120			50		50				30	250	Unit: 51st Air Flotilla
Reported to Comdr SIXTH Base Air Force, October 13th-15th in Formosa from China.*****	31										31	Units: 254th & 256th Air Groups
TOTAL											1425	

\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer FOURTH Air Army, Department of Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.  
 \*\* War Diary 501st Attack Unit (752nd Air Group), October 11th, 1944, WDC Document 161634.  
 \*\*\* Staff Officer, SIXTH Base Air Force at Kanoya, Dispatches 121536 and "no time group" October 13th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* Staff Officer, Base Air Force at Kanoya Dispatch, October 13th, 1944. War Diary KOKUBU, 103rd Detachment Attack Unit, October 13th.-31st, 1944. WDC Document 160258.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Action Reports 254th and 256th Air Groups.

and included the land-based air units based in the Nansei Shoto.

(3) Western Attack Force THREE (W3AB) with headquarters at Shinchiku on the northwest coast of Formosa. This force was commanded by Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla and embraced land-based air forces in Formosa.

(4) Western Attack Force FOUR (W4AB). This force was apparently an administrative command which embraced the Army Air Force units operating under Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. It does not appear to have controlled the operations of those units. They operated under one of the other subordinate commands.

(5) "T" Force. This was a special attack force composed of the more experienced crews of the various tactical organizations of SIXTH Base Air Force. It was the major striking power of SIXTH Base Air Force and was trained to conduct both night and adverse weather attacks.\* On October 10th it was based in Kyushu.

In early October Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was engaged in conducting long-range search defensive patrols, and training. In addition, he was concerned with the maintenance of planes for redeployment which would be required under the SHO plans.

The strength of the SIXTH Base Air Force on October 10th was as indicated in Table 11. By this time it had reached a relatively fair state of operational readiness. Its most competent unit was the "T" Force. The remaining units were less fully trained but were considered capable of attack during daylight. Subsequent to October 10th, the SIXTH Base Air Force was reinforced as shown in Table 12.

Detailed availability figures for units of the SIXTH Base Air Force are not available. The over-all number of aircraft actually available, however, was one-half to two-thirds of those assigned.\*\* Such unit figures as are available indicate that this figure was about 60%. Thus of the 737 aircraft under the operational control of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force on October 10th, about 442 aircraft were operational. Likewise, of the total of 1425 aircraft operated by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force during the period October 10th-17th, about 855 were operational.

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* USSBS NAV No. 193, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Commander Moriyoshi Yamaguchi, IJN, Operations Officer, SIXTH Base Air Force, Vol. 1, page 178.



TABLE 13  
 FIFTH BASE AIR FORCE\*  
 10 October, 1944

	Fighters	Carrier Type Bombers	Carrier Type Attack	Land Bombers	Land Attack	Land Recco	TOTAL
Aircraft Assigned	191	35	24	31	50	5	336
Aircraft Available	115	21	13	17	34	3	203

\* (1) These are proportionate figures projected from firm figures for Sept. 1st 1944, contained in Naval Air Operations in the Philippines area, 1942-1945, Japanese Studies in World War II. Historical Section G-2, GHQ, FEC.

(2) They are based on three separate notations. One gives a complete breakdown of aircraft by types and totals for both assigned (on hand) and available (operational) aircraft as of September 1st. The second gives a firm total for available aircraft only as of October 1st. The third indicates the replacement aircraft expected during the month of October. The table figures were then obtained by taking the total figure for available aircraft on October 1st, adding one-third the expected October replacements, and applying the ratios of available aircraft (a) to assigned aircraft and (b) to the relative numbers of aircraft by types which obtained on September 1st.

TABLE 14  
 FOURTH AIR ARMY\*  
 26 September, 1944\*\*

	Fighters	Light Bombers	Heavy Bombers	Attack Planes	Recco Planes	Assault Recco Planes	TOTAL
Aircraft Assigned	138	25	65	83	27	57	395
Aircraft Available	83	15	39	50	16	34	237

\* Source: Documents kept by Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer FOURTH Air Army, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\* Data available to this study does not indicate any significant change in strength between September 26th and October 10th, 1944.

\*\*\* The "aircraft available" figures are those given by the Japanese documents and are considered to be correct. The aircraft assigned (on hand) figures were obtained by dividing the various "aircraft available (operational)" figures by sixty per cent since Japanese records indicate that in general about sixty per cent of the assigned aircraft were available.



## (b) Philippines Area

In the Philippines area there were two major land-based air commands, one Navy, one Army.

The Navy command was the FIFTH Base Air Force. This base air force, with headquarters in Manila, operated under Commander Southwest Area Force\* who was a subordinate of CinC, Combined Fleet. On October 10th, its strength was as indicated in Table 13. It was not at this time a well trained organization since it had been reorganized in July from the remnants which had survived the defeat in the Marianas. However, an intensive training program and a plan for the replenishment of aircraft and personnel had been instituted. The program had not as yet been very successful since (a) it had been seriously interfered with during September by Allied carrier raids on its bases, and (b) availability of aircraft had been severely reduced by maintenance difficulties and lack of spare parts. As a result the effective aircraft strength of the FIFTH Base Air Force which had been built up to 280 by early September had fallen to but 110 by September 25th. Thereafter it was built up to the figures shown in Table 13. However, due to these rapid fluctuations in strength and to the influx of new personnel, coupled with the difficulties of conducting training simultaneously with combat operations, the FIFTH Base Air Force had not become a thoroughly trained combat organization at the time of the Leyte campaign.\*\*

The Army air organization in the Philippines was the FOURTH Air Army.\*\*\* This air army, also with headquarters at Manila, operated under CinC Southern Army\*\*\*\* who in turn operated directly under the Army General Staff in Tokyo. The FOURTH Air Army in a manner similar to the FIFTH Base Air Force had incurred heavy losses from Allied carrier attacks in September, and in addition had had many of its senior officers debilitated by malaria or dengue. Both its Commanding General and Chief of Staff had been replaced on September 8th as a result of disease. These factors seriously hindered the attainment of a satisfactory degree of readiness.\*\*\*\*\* The aircraft strength of the FOURTH Air Army available to this study is for September 26th and is indicated in Table 14. These figures do not appear to have materially changed by October 10th.

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\* Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa, IJN.

\*\* Naval Air Operations in the Philippines Area, 1942-1945, Japanese Studies in World War II, Historical Section, G-2 GHQ, FEC File No. 8-5.

\*\*\* Commanded by Lieutenant General Kyoji Tominaga, IJA.

\*\*\*\* Field Marshal Hisaichi Terauchi, IJA.

\*\*\*\*\* Philippine Air Operations, Phase II, FOURTH Air Army Operation 1944-1945, First Demobilization Bureau Monograph Japanese Government, October 1946, Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



As has been noted previously there was no unified command of all units operating in the Philippines. There was, however, the Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO air operations, and also a coordination agreement between Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and CG, FOURTH Air Army, the latter to provide for coordination prior to the activation of the SHO Operations. The details of these agreements have been noted under Japanese Command Relations.

(2) Types and General Characteristics of Japanese Aircraft Employed in Land Operations

(a) Fighter Aircraft

There were several types of fighter aircraft available to the Japanese in October 1944.\* These fighters, in general, had an average speed of about 300 knots and a combat radius of about 400 miles. This radius was slightly better than that of the Allied fighters which opposed them, but the average speed was considerably lower. While the Allied fighters were considerably heavier, carried more guns, armor, and equipment, and had a considerable faster rate of climb, they were less maneuverable.

(1) Navy

The most numerous of the fighter types available to the Navy was the carrier-type fighter which, with the land reconnaissance plane and interceptor-fighter, accounted for most of its fighter strength.

(a) The carrier-type fighter had a combat radius of 400 miles and a maximum speed of 300 knots. It carried four guns, two 7.7mm and two 20mm but had no armor or self-sealing fuel tanks.

(b) The land reconnaissance plane was basically a three place reconnaissance aircraft employed as both a day and night fighter. Its combat radius was 450 miles; its maximum speed 270 knots. It carried four 20mm guns and was equipped with armor and self-sealing tanks.

(c) The interceptor-fighter, which was the newest of the Navy fighters, outperformed the older types with a combat radius of 500 miles and a maximum speed of 354 knots. It was equipped with four 20mm guns, armor and self-sealing tanks.

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\* Data on Japanese Aircraft obtained from:

- (a) Representative Enemy and Allied Aircraft; Comparative performance and Characteristics, TAIC Manual, No. 2, October 1944.
- (b) CINCPAC-CINCPOA Weekly Intelligence Vol. 1, No. 19; Enclosure Data Table, Japanese Combat Aircraft, November 17th, 1944.



(2) Army

The most numerous of the fighter types available to the Army were the Type-1 and Type-3 fighters.

(a) The Type-1 fighter had a combat radius of 350 miles and maximum speed of 296 knots. It carried armor and self-sealing tanks, although the tanks were defective and not actually leak-proof. It carried two 12.7mm guns.

(b) The Type-3 fighter had a combat radius of 450 miles and a maximum speed of 314 knots. It also carried armor and self-sealing tanks and was armed with four 12.7mm guns.

(c) A third Army fighter, the heavy fighter, was available in lesser numbers. It had a combat radius of 400 miles, a maximum speed of 309 knots, armor and ineffective self-sealing tanks and was equipped with two 12.7mm guns, and one 37mm gun. It was employed as both a day and night fighter.

(b) Bomber Aircraft

There were several types of bombers available to the Japanese in October, 1944.

(1) Navy

In the bomber field, the principal Navy strength was made up of carrier-based bombers, carrier-based reconnaissance planes, and two-engine land-bombers. The first two were carrier dive bombers.

(a) The carrier-based bomber had a combat radius of 350 miles and a maximum speed of 230 knots and was armed with three 7.7mm guns and carried a 550 lb. bomb. It had neither armor nor self-sealing tanks.

(b) The carrier-based reconnaissance planes, which had been replacing the carrier-based bombers in October 1944, had better performance. It had a combat radius of 400 miles with a maximum speed of 298 knots. Its armament was the same as that of the carrier-based bomber, but it could carry a 1100 lb. bomb. It had neither armor nor self-sealing tanks.

(c) The two-engine land-bomber had a combat radius of 700 miles with bomb load of 1,000 miles on search missions. Its maximum speed was 305 knots. It could carry a 1760 lb. bomb or a torpedo; armor was provided for the pilot.

(2) Army

Of the Army bombers available the heavy bomber was the most numerous. Its combat radius was 700 miles, its maximum speed 260 knots and its bomb capacity two 1100 lb. bombs. It was armed with one 20mm and six 7.9mm guns and was equipped with armor and self-sealing tanks.

(c) Attack Aircraft

There were several types of attack aircraft available in October, 1944.

(1) Navy

The Navy had available two carrier-based types, the Type-14 and the Type-97, and one land-based type. The carrier-based types were capable of carrying torpedoes.

(a) The Type-14 had a combat radius of 400 miles and a maximum speed of 260 knots. It was armed with two 7.7mm guns and could carry one 1760 lb. bomb or torpedo. It had no armor or self-sealing tanks.

(b) The Type-97 had a combat radius of 375 miles and a maximum speed of 192 knots. It was armed with three 7.7mm guns and could carry the same load as Type-14. It also had no armor or self-sealing tanks.

(c) The land-based type had a combat radius of 750 miles with a bomb load of one 1760 lb. bomb or torpedo. When on a reconnaissance mission its radius was increased to 1,000 miles. Its maximum speed was 236 knots. It carried armor for the tail gunner and ineffective self-sealing tanks.

(2) Army

The Army's attack aircraft were the heavy bomber and the light bomber.

(a) The heavy bomber had a combat radius of 600 miles and a maximum speed of 245 knots. It could carry two 1,100 lb. bombs and was armed with five 7.7mm and one 12.7mm guns. It had armor and self-sealing tanks.

(b) The light bomber had a combat radius of 400 miles and a maximum speed of 270 knots. It could carry a maximum bomb load of 1,600 lbs. and was armed with four 7.7mm guns. It had no armor and only ineffective self-sealing tanks.



## (d) Reconnaissance Aircraft

Two types of reconnaissance aircraft were available to the Navy.

(1) The carrier-based reconnaissance plane had a combat radius of 700 miles and a maximum speed of 340 knots. It was armed with one 7.9mm gun, and equipped with armor and self-sealing tanks.

(2) The land reconnaissance plane, which in addition to its use by the Navy, was the principal reconnaissance plane of the Army, had a combat radius of 500 miles and a maximum speed of 323 knots. It carried the same armament as the former but no armor or self-sealing tanks.

## (e) Aircraft Radar Characteristics

Complete details regarding the installation of airborne radar in Japanese aircraft in October 1944 are not available. Radar was installed in at least some of the carrier-based attack planes, land attack planes, and land reconnaissance planes in operation at this time. Those aircraft so equipped carried Mark 6, Model 4, Type 3 search radar.\* This equipment had an estimated maximum range of forty-five miles on a battleship and of fifteen miles on a submarine awash.\*\* Heavy bombers, and possibly some other types of Army aircraft, were equipped with TA KI Mark 1\* radar which had an estimated maximum range of thirty-two miles on a cruiser and of seven miles on a submarine awash.\*\*

## (3) Japanese Air Bases

## (a) Kyushu

Within the southern Kyushu area there were a total of fourteen naval airfields, three seaplane bases, and six Army airfields.\*\*\* All but three of the airfields provided two or more runways. The fields were generally concentrated on the southern coast of Kyushu including Kagoshima Bay. In this area there were thirteen fields, including the principal naval air station at Kanoya, and the three seaplane bases. Farther north on the east coast were five more fields including the major base at Miyazaki. On the west coast there were two fields including the major naval air station at Izumi.

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\* Japanese Radar and RCM Equipment, published by CINCPAC-CINCPOA, Serial 04905, May 15th, 1945.

\*\* COM-ONI Technical Intelligence. Bulletin No. 2; Japanese Radar Equipment, May 1945.

\*\*\* CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 112-45, May 12th, 1945, (Digest of Japanese Naval Air Bases, Special Translation No. 65) Information on Southern Kyushu, Nansei Shoto and Formosa Airfields.

## (b) Nansei Shoto

In the Nansei Shoto the principal air base facilities were on Okinawa. There were two naval air stations on Okinawa, (Okinawa North and Oroku) and one Army air base. Each naval air station had three runways; the Army air base had three satellite strips. An additional Army air base with two separate strips was located on Ie Shima. Southwest 150 miles from Okinawa was Miyaka Jima on which was located a naval air station with three runways and also two Army strips. Seventy miles farther to the southwest at Ishigaki Jima there were one Army strip, and two Navy strips. One of these Navy strips was being expanded into a three-runway field, but the additional runways had not been completed.

In the islands to the northeast of Okinawa there were two Army strips on Tokuno Shima, one naval air station on Kikai Shima and one naval air station on Tanega Shima which island was but twenty miles off the south coast of Kyushu. To the east of Okinawa two hundred miles there was one naval air station with four runways on Minami Daito Jima.

## (c) Formosa

On Formosa, due to the terrain, air base facilities were generally concentrated in three areas: the north coast, the central west coast, and the southwest coast. In the north there were three naval air stations, five Army airfields, and one seaplane base. All of the Army airfields, and one of the Navy air stations had single strips. The naval air station at Shinchiku which was a major base had five runways, while that at Taihoku had three runways, the third being completed in October 1944.

On the central west coast there were three naval air stations of which one, Taichu (Navy), had two runways; one had a single strip, and one had an unsurfaced landing mat. In this area there were five Army air bases and a sixth under construction. Of these five, only Taichu (Army), was a major base with more than one runway.

On the southwest coast there were a total of five naval air stations, one seaplane base, and five Army air bases. Of the naval air stations three were major installations: two at Takao with seven and three runways, respectively, and one at Tainan with seven runways plus a small satellite field. Of the remaining two naval air stations one had two runways, and the other had only a single strip. The major Army air base was at Heito where there were two adjoining fields each with two runways. Of the remaining four Army installations, one had two runways, one had one, and two had unsurfaced landing mats.

On the east coast of Formosa in the narrow level area between the mountains and the sea there were a few minor installations. In the



northern portion were two Army fields one with a landing mat, the other with a single strip. To the south was one Naval air station (Taito) and one Army base, each with two unsurfaced runways.

(d) Philippines

Within the Philippines there were a large number of airfield installations.\* On Luzon the airfields were concentrated in part in the central area between Manila and Lingayen. Within the Manila area there were approximately nine airfields including Nichols and Neilson. To the north of Manila Bay there were eleven more airfields including Clark, Mabalacat, and Tarlac, while south of Manila there were five fields. Nichols was the largest of the Manila area fields, having an estimated capacity of from two hundred to three hundred planes. Neilson's capacity was estimated at between one hundred and two hundred planes while the remaining seven airfields had capacities estimated at between fifty and one hundred planes.

The heaviest concentration of air installations in the Philippines was in the area north of Manila Bay. Clark Field No. 1 had an estimated capacity in excess of three hundred planes; Clark North an estimated capacity of from two hundred to three hundred planes. Both Mabalacat and Tablas had estimated capacities of from one hundred to two hundred planes each. The four satellite fields of the Clark Air Base complex together had an additional capacity in excess of three hundred planes. The three remaining operational fields in this area had estimated capacities of less than fifty planes.

Four of the five airfields south of Manila, including two fields at Lipa were estimated to have capacities between fifty and one hundred planes each. The fifth installation was smaller with a capacity of less than fifty planes.

In northern Luzon there were but five operational airfields located as follows: (a) In the Lingayen area two fields, each with estimated capacities of from fifty to one hundred planes; (b) on the northwest coast a small field at Laoag and a similar installation at Aparri on the north coast, with capacities estimated at less than fifty planes each; (c) at Tuguegarao in north central Luzon a single airfield with an estimated capacity of from fifty to one hundred planes.

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\* Information on Philippine airfields from:

- (1) Information Bulletin, Philippines and Halmahera, CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin No. 125-44, August 15th, 1944.
- (2) Operational Airfields, Enclosure to CINCPAC-CINCPOA Weekly Intelligence Bulletin Vol I, No. 12, September 25th, 1944.



In southeastern Luzon there were four operational airfields located as follows: two small airfields at Naga and Bulan with capacities of between fifty and one hundred planes each; two smaller fields at Legaspi and Tiwi with capacities of less than fifty planes each.

In the Visayas air installations were generally concentrated on the east coast of Leyte, and the north coast of Negros. There was a smaller concentration on Cebu. On Leyte, there were at least five operational airfields. Four of these were on the east coast of the island. Two of these, Tacloban and San Pablo were estimated to have an aircraft capacity of fifty to one hundred planes. The other two, Dulag and Malabka, together, had a similar capacity. Near the west coast, north of Ormoc, was Valencia airfield which also had a capacity of from fifty to one hundred planes.

On Negros there were at least eight operational airfields located as follows: (a) On the northwest coast, four fields. Of these the major base with an estimated aircraft capacity of from one hundred to two hundred planes was at Bacolod. This base had two satellite fields each with a capacity of less than fifty planes. An additional field in the area had a capacity of from fifty to one hundred planes. (b) On the north coast, three airfields, each with a capacity of from fifty to one hundred planes. (c) On the southeast coast, a small field at Dumaguete with an estimated aircraft capacity of less than fifty planes.

An additional minor concentration of airfields was located on the central east coast of Cebu. There were three fields in this area of which two were estimated to have a capacity of from fifty to one hundred planes, while a third and smaller field had a capacity of less than fifty planes.

In Mindanao the largest concentration of air facilities was in the Davao area, where there were at least six installations with a total estimated capacity of more than five hundred planes. In the Del Monte area on the northwest coast there was a smaller group of fields with a capacity in excess of one hundred and fifty planes. On the Zamboanga peninsula was another similar group. Near the Surigao peninsula in the northeast was a single field estimated capable of supporting fifty to one hundred planes.

#### (d) JAPANESE AIR SEARCH AND RECONNAISSANCE

The plans for Navy air reconnaissance under the SHO Operation were promulgated by CinC, Combined Fleet.\* These plans provided standard

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\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 82, August 1st, 1944, Regulations and Standard Procedures for Air Patrols by Combined Fleet Base Air Forces; and Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944 - Air Combat Regulations for SHO Operations, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).



instructions relating to the type aircraft to be used, types of search and reconnaissance, patrol origins and sector designations, patrol altitudes, and general tactics to be employed in patrol, search, and scouting.

Control of reconnaissance operations was normally vested in Base Air Force commanders within the narrow limits set down by CinC, Combined Fleet. Changes in patrol sectors resulting from the enemy situation or availability of aircraft could be made. However, such changes together with times of take-off were to be reported to CinC, Combined Fleet in advance who reserved the authority to control directly these operations at any time.\*

Why CinC, Combined Fleet found it necessary to maintain such rigid control over his air searches even to the extent of designating the number of planes to make a designated search is nowhere explained. Whether it was the usual Japanese practice, or whether it was done because CinC, Combined Fleet, owing to the heavy losses he had suffered during the Marianas operations, had a lack of confidence in his various air commanders, particularly those on the lower echelons of command, is not known. Certainly it is important that a commander know whether or not certain searches have been made, but it is not important that he know, for example, the number of planes which made the search nor the density of search. In this connection the U.S. Navy instructions state that "It is essential that the commander responsible for the security of areas on which the search is being conducted be kept fully informed of any omissions in sectors which he considers under surveillance. Fleet commanders, operating in areas covered by search operations are also concerned with the effectiveness of the searches and normally should have control of all such operations."\*\*

In American naval practice it is usually sufficient for the commander to direct that certain sectors from certain bases be covered to a designated limiting range. The subordinate commanders will then determine the type of search best suited for their areas and the density of search. In other words, while the control of the sectors to be searched remains within the commander who ordered the search, all other details are the province of the subordinate commanders.

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\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 82, August 1st, 1944, Regulations and Standard Procedures for Air Patrols by Combined Fleet Base Air Forces; and Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944 - Air Combat Regulations for SHO Operations, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* Long-Range Air Reconnaissance and Scouting Instructions U.S. Fleets USF-11, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Chapter 7, para. 713, page 7-1.

Control of air reconnaissance was exercised as follows:

(1) In the Formosa-Nansei Shoto - Southern Kyushu Area.

By Commander SIXTH Base Air Force who was the unified commander of all air forces in this area.

(2) In the Philippine Area

Since there was no unified command of air forces in this area the responsibility for control of air searches was divided between the Navy and the Army.

(a) Long-range patrol (600-900 miles) by Commander FIFTH Base Air Force.\*

(b) Short-range patrols (300 miles) jointly by Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and CG, FOURTH Air Army (local agreement).\*\*

(1) Formosa-Nansei Shoto - Southern Kyushu Area

(a) The plan promulgated by CinC, Combined Fleet called for searches in this area as follows:\*\*\*

<u>Base</u>	<u>Sector</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>No. of Planes</u>
Kanoya (Southern Kyushu)	087°-153°(T)	650 mi.	6
Okinawa	097°-163°(T)	650 mi.	6
Shinchiku (Northern Formosa)	087°-143°(T)	600 mi.	5

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\* Imperial GHQ Navy Section Directive No. 435, July 26th, 1944 - Supplement: Army-Navy Central Agreement Concerning SHO Air Operations, Part III, para. 4, WDC Document 216769.

\*\* Agreement Concerning Operations Against Enemy Task Forces concluded by CG, FOURTH Air Army and Commander FIFTH Base Air Forces, date unknown, but believed to be September or early October 1944, contained in file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJN, Staff Officer, FOURTH Air Army, Department of Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.

\*\*\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 82, August 1st, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).



(b) As noted, CinC, Combined Fleet held close control over Navy air reconnaissance. He directed that searches be carried out based on the sectors indicated above, with any required changes reported to him in advance. He further directed that such searches depart their bases between sunrise and two hours thereafter and normally fly at 1500 feet altitude, or less.\*

CinC, Combined Fleet's search plan covered an adequate sector as regards limiting bearings, but did not cover an adequate sector as regards limiting radii. Why CinC, Combined Fleet did not extend his searches beyond 650 miles is not understood since both the land attack planes and the two engine land bombers had a maximum patrol radius of more than 800 miles.\*\* A search to a radius of 800 miles would have required about eleven and one-half hours for the two-engine land bombers and thirteen hours for the land attack planes. Since there were approximately eleven and one-half hours of daylight plus nearly one and one-half hours of twilight on each end of the day, the longer patrol could have been conducted during daylight including twilight. The 650 mile search was divided into 10° sectors and the search planes were directed to fly the sector in such manner as to permit complete coverage allowing a thirty mile range of visibility or radar detection. This was beyond the normal range of visibility but was within the detection range of the radar carried. However, in several instances, for unexplained reasons, the search sectors were so laid down as to require as much as forty-five miles range of detection between adjacent sectors to insure coverage. This was the case in the sectors covered from Shinchiku during the first ten days of October. The Kanoya search on October 9th required thirty-five miles range of visibility between sectors.

Since the visibility in the search area was reported by the search aircraft as varying between zero and fifteen miles\*\*\* it is evident that CinC, Combined Fleet relied almost entirely on radar detection in his search plans.

(c) CinC, Combined Fleet's search plan was implemented as follows:

(1) Kanoya: Searches from this base were conducted by the 708th Attack Unit of the 762nd Air Group under Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. Land attack aircraft, radar equipped, were used for search. Prior to October 8th, the search from Kanoya was in accordance with CinC, Combined Fleet's basic search plan which called for six search sectors. On October 9th the search was reduced from six to four

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\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 82, August 1st, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* Comparative Performance and Characteristics, Representative Enemy and Allied Aircraft, TAIC Manual No. 2, October 1944.

\*\*\* Commander Kanoya Air Base Dispatches 061902, 081817 and 091801, October 1944, Detailed Patrol and Action Report No. 5, 708th Attack Unit (762nd Air Group), Patrols of "Q" Sector, October 4th-11th, 1944; WDC Document 161437, NA 12447.



aircraft to cover the sector  $094\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}(T)$  to  $153\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}(T)$ . Each sector was increased from ten degrees to twelve and one-half degrees, thereby increasing the range of visibility required to cover the sector from thirty miles to thirty-five miles.\* This change was apparently approved by CinC, Combined Fleet. One of these search aircraft failed to return from its mission on October 9th having been shot down by an American patrol plane from Tinian.\*\*

(2) Okinawa: Searches from this base were conducted by the Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla. Two-engine land bombers were employed. Commencing with October 8th, Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla at Okinawa reduced his search from six to four planes and thereafter, instead of covering the sector between  $097^{\circ}(T)$  and  $163^{\circ}(T)$  planned to cover on odd days the sector  $117\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}(T)$  and on even days the sector  $122\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}(T)$ - $162\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}(T)$ \*\*\*

(3) Shinchiku: The Shinchiku searches were conducted by a detachment of the 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group, using land attack aircraft. During the first ten days of October only three aircraft per day were employed in search.\*\*\*\*

The reasons for the reduction in search coverage from Okinawa after October 8th, and from Kanoya after October 9th, are not clear. Would it not appear that, as the time of expected Allied attack approached, it would be reasonable to increase rather than reduce these searches? Apparently it was felt that this reduced coverage was adequate to provide early warning. Possibly the desire to conserve aircraft and crews in readiness for later operations affected this decision.

## (2) Philippines Area

(a) Inasmuch as there was no unified air command in the Philippines area, the conduct of air search was the subject of a joint agreement. As has been previously noted, the Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO air operations promulgated in July authorized Army and

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\* Commander 762nd Air Group Dispatch 081820, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet and Commander SECOND Air Fleet (SIXTH Base Air Force). WDC Document 161437.

\*\* Detailed Patrol and Action Report No. 5, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group; Patrols of "Q" Sectors, October 4th-11th, 1944, WDC Document 161437.

\*\*\* Western Attack Force TWO (Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla) SigOrd No. 24, October 7th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group; Searches and Patrols of "F's" Sectors, October 1st-17th, 1944; WDC Document 160579 also War Diary TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 160137.



Navy subordinate commanders to enter into such agreements. Accordingly, sometime in late September or early October, Commander FOURTH Air Army and Commander FIFTH Base Air Force made an agreement concerning operations against enemy task forces.\* Among the joint operations agreed upon were air searches.

(b) Prior to the above agreement, CinC, Combined Fleet's plans for air reconnaissance from Philippines bases provided for the following:\*\*

<u>Base</u>	<u>Sector</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>No. of Planes</u>
Manila	057°-113°(T)	650	5
Davao	037°-133°(T)	650	9
Legaspi***	047°-113°(T)	650	6

(c) As a result of the THIRD Fleet carrier strikes in September, long-range patrol planes in the southern Philippines were moved to bases to the westward to provide better protection from future attacks. Accordingly, under the Joint Agreement the effective search plan was revised in late September or early October and provided for the following searches:\*

Long-Range Search:

<u>Base</u>	<u>Sector</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>No. of Planes</u>
Manila	041°-101°(T)	650	4
Legaspi	076°-121°(T)	650	3
Zamboanga	071°-116°(T)	650	3

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\* Agreement concerning Operations against enemy task forces, - Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, FOURTH Air Army, Department of Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.

\*\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 82, August 1st, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* Legaspi searches added by Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 94, August 27th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945, (NACHI Document).

Short-Range Search:

<u>Base</u>	<u>Sector</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>No. of Planes</u>
Tuguegarao	040°-100°(T)	300	3
Clark	069°-093°(T)	300	1
Naga	039°-101°(T)	300	3
Tacloban	054°-116°(T)	300	3
Davao	066°-184°(T)	300	6

These searches are indicated on Diagram "B".

(d) By agreement all long range searches were assigned to the Navy. The short-range searches were divided between the Navy and Army. The Navy units designated for the long-range search are not available to this study. In the case of the short-range searches, responsibility was assigned as follows:\*

<u>Base</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Type Aircraft</u>
Tuguegarao	27th Air Regiment (Army)	Type 2 - two seater VF
Clark	2nd Air Regiment (Army)	Hdqtrs Recco planes
Naga	27th Air Regiment (Army)	Type 2 - two seater VF
Tacloban	27th Air Regiment (Army)	Type 2 - two seater VF
Davao	102nd Recco Unit, 153rd Air Group (Navy)	

(e) The search plan as agreed upon by the Philippines air commanders was adequate insofar as the sectors covered. The range of the long-range searches however could have been increased from 650 miles to 800 miles and the probability of early detection of an enemy force thus improved. While the data available does not specify what types of aircraft were employed by Commander FIFTH Base Air Force to conduct the long-range search, he had available sufficient numbers of both two-engine land bombers and land attack planes for this purpose. As discussed under the similar conditions existing in the SIXTH Base Air Force searches, either of these types was capable of an 800 mile daylight

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\* Agreement concerning Operations against enemy task forces - Documents from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, Staff Officer, FOURTH Air Army, Department of Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.



search. Information available does not indicate whether or not radar was installed in the search planes from the Philippines, but since the search plan was based on a range of detection of about forty-one miles, which would be excessive for a visual search, it is presumed that the search planes were radar equipped.

The data available to this study does not indicate whether or not Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and CG, FOURTH Air Army complied completely with their plan for conducting three daily searches prior to October 10th. However, since the number of planes required was but a small part of the number available and since the only other requirement, during this period, was that of training of air units, it seems reasonable to assume that they did carry out the plan.

(e) JAPANESE DEPLOYMENT NAVAL AND AIR FORCES

(1) General Discussion

As has been pointed out previously the Japanese Combined Fleet consisted of surface forces, submarine forces, base air forces, and area forces. The composition of the base air forces has been discussed under Japanese Land and Tender-Based Aircraft. The surface force for the SHO One Operation was essentially the Mobile Force. The Mobile Force, as designated by CinC, Combined Fleet, consisted of three principal forces - the Main Force (THIRD Fleet), the FIRST Striking Force (SECOND Fleet) and the SECOND Striking Force (FIFTH Fleet). The submarine force consisted of the Advance Expeditionary Force (SIXTH Fleet).\* Area forces consisted of minor surface craft, base forces and in some instances shore-based air.

The basic objective of all Japanese forces, land, sea and air, for the SHO Operations was the destruction of the Allied Fleet and invasion forces in the area finally selected as the area for decisive battle.\*\* This area was to be designated by Imperial General Headquarters.\*\*\*

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- \* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 84, August 1st, 1944, SHO Plans and Allocations of Orders ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).
  - \*\* Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Section I, General Policy for Operations, para. B, page 4, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document); also Outline of Future Army-Navy Operational Policy, Imperial General Headquarters Army and Navy Sections, WDC Document 216768 (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\* SIXTH Base Air Force Basic SHO Operation Order No. 6, September 5th, 1944, Part I, General Outline of SHO Operations, from file of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-18, Item D; also Imperial General Headquarters, Navy Section Directive 435, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).



The Japanese hoped that this would cause the disruption of the plans of the advancing Allies and would thereby, at least temporarily, safeguard the Japanese lines of communications with their vital southern resources. This required the concentration of all available Japanese power at a definite time and place.

CinC, Combined Fleet found that the accomplishment of this objective was going to be very difficult for, owing to (a) a critical shortage of oil in the Empire and (b) a shortage of trained pilots and replacement aircraft in his carriers, he had been forced to separate his principal forces by some 2500 miles. He had been forced to retain his carrier forces (Main Force) within the Empire until he had trained sufficient pilots and had received his replacement aircraft, and he had been forced on July 7th to order his heavy surface forces (FIRST Striking Force) south to the Lingga-Singapore\* area where there was oil in sufficient quantity to permit training as well as to permit fleet operations. He had been forced to do this in order to prevent the exhaustion of the limited oil stocks still remaining in the Empire.\*\* This was obviously a highly unsatisfactory situation in either a strategical or tactical sense and was far from satisfactory to CinC, Combined Fleet and to Commander Mobile Force both of whom desired to maintain the forces concentrated. They preferred to maintain them concentrated within the Empire (Inland Sea) but would have been satisfied to have had them concentrated at Lingga-Singapore.\*\* They planned to concentrate the bulk of the Mobile and other surface forces in the Lingga-Singapore area about early November, but the Allies prevented this by striking before the training of the Main Force was completed and therefore before the command was ready.\*\* The FIRST Striking Force departed the Inland Sea on July 9th.\*\*\*

CinC, Combined Fleet in Operation Order 83 issued on August 1st and Operation Order 85 issued on August 4th, promulgated his general instructions for the conduct of the SHO Operations.\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary DESRON 10, July-September 1944, WDC Document 160985-A.

\*\* The Campaigns of the Pacific War USSBS, 1946, Chapter XII, page 280; also USSBS Interrogations NAV No. 9, Vol I, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takao Kurita, IJN, page 38; also Interrogation NAV No. 55, Vol I, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, IJN, page 220; also Imperial General Headquarters Navy Section Directive No. 431, July 21st, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm), and War Diary Commander Mobile Force, October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 160341, NA 11404.

\*\*\* Naval War Diary World War II (B), Vol III, April 1944 to September 2nd, 1944, SCAP/ATIS Document No. 16638-B.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Operation Orders No. 83 August 1st, 1944 and No. 85, August 4th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945, pages 226 and 233 (NACHI Document).



Unfortunately, those two operation orders are not available as they were ordered burned when no longer required.\* However, their contents are known in general, since on August 10th, Commander Mobile Force issued a directive to his own command\*\* which directive was based on these two operation orders. This Mobile Force directive is available and gives the Japanese plan for the employment of the surface forces as developed by CinC, Combined Fleet and Commander Mobile Force.

(a) Commander Mobile Force Allocations prior to October 10th.

In his plan Commander Mobile Force prescribed four different task organizations (allocations) of the forces under his command each of which was designed to meet a different situation. These allocations were designated as One, Two, Three and Four and covered the Main Force, FIRST Striking Force and SECOND Striking Force. They were designed to provide (a) the maximum strength for operations prior to the end of August during which period the carrier force was being reorganized (Allocation One), (b) to facilitate training and preparation between the end of August and prior to the issuance of the alert for the SHO Operations (Allocation Two), (c) to provide the maximum strength for carrier operations by the Main Force during SHO Operations after the end of August (Allocation Three), and (d) to provide maximum strength for surface operations by the Main Force after the end of August (Allocation Four).\*\*\*

In his Allocation Three, Commander Mobile Force did not designate the SECOND Striking Force as a separate force, but instead absorbed its units within the Main Force which was organized into two carrier groups. In his Allocation Four he did designate the SECOND Striking Force as a separate force, but in so doing included it within the Main Force. The reasons for this, while nowhere explained, seem reasonably clear. During air operations he desired to concentrate his air power within two powerful task groups; during surface operations he considered that the need for strong anti-aircraft defense within his task groups was relatively unimportant compared with the need for a powerful striking force which he might employ in independent action against Allied surface forces.

For the SHO Operation CinC, Combined Fleet considered that the FIRST Striking Force was his primary striking force. Not only is this evidenced by the title "First" which he gave this force, but it is also

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Operation Orders No. 83, August 1st, 1944 and No. 85 August 4th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945, pages 226 and 233 (NACHI Document).

\*\* Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Section III, Allocation of Forces, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945, page 7 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* Ibid, pages 7-11 inclusive.



evidenced by the fact that his Main Force (his carrier force) in carrying out the basic objective of the Mobile Force "the destruction of the enemy task force and landing group," was given an objective in support of the FIRST Striking Force. Whether this supporting objective was a concept of CinC, Combined Fleet is not known, but best evidence is that it was contained in CinC, Combined Fleet's Operation Orders 33 and 85 previously referred to. The FIRST Striking Force's objective was the destruction, by decisive battle, of the Allied surface forces (such as the SEVENTH Fleet) which endeavored to stop its entry into the landing area. Then after annihilating these forces, it was to attack and destroy the transports and their embarked troops at the landing point (beachhead). In accomplishing this the Commander FIRST Striking Force was directed to avoid any engagement with the Allied carriers.\*

The supporting objective assigned the Main Force was "the facilitation of the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force into the Allied landing area (a) by diverting the Allied carrier forces (THIRD Fleet) to the northeast (b) by engaging the Allied carrier task forces in a flank attack and (c) if the situation permits, by destroying the Allied service forces.\* Thus, it is clear that as early as August 10th, 1944 both CinC, Combined Fleet and Commander Mobile Force had envisaged the employment of the carrier force as a bait to lure the Allied carrier force (in this case the THIRD Fleet) to the northeast and away from a suitable covering position with relation to any Allied landing operations in the Philippines, Formosa, Nansai Shoto area. They hoped thus to increase the freedom of action of the FIRST Striking Force.

Since under Commander Mobile Force's Operation Order No. 76\* Allocation Two was to be in effect until the issuance of the alert for SHO One, it is of interest to note the composition of the various groups of the Mobile Force as assigned by Commander Mobile Force for this allocation. These groups were:

(1) Main Force

This force was divided into four forces called the "A Force," "B Force," "C Force" and SECOND Striking Force. The "A Force" was composed solely of CARDIV ONE less UNRYU, the "B Force" of CARDIV THREE, the "C Force" of CARDIV FOUR, and the SECOND Striking Force of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, DESRON ONE, MOGAMI, DESRON ELEVEN, DESDIV SIXTY-ONE and BATDIV TWO. BATDIV TWO, which was composed of the FUSO and YAMASHIRO, completed training on September 22nd, at which time it was detached. Escorted by DESDIV SEVENTEEN (URAKAZE, HAMAKAZE, ISOKAZE and YUKIKAZE) it sailed, on the same day, for Lingga, via Brunei Bay, where it arrived at 1400 October 2nd, 1944 and reported to Commander

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\* Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Section II, Concrete Operational Policy, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945, page 5 (NACHI Document).



FIRST Striking Force for duty.\* MOGAMI also was detached about this time and proceeded to Lingga. The SECOND Striking Force, except for these changes, was maintained with slight variations as demanded by operations until October 14th when, as will be shown later, it was radically reorganized. The Main Force continued to operate in the Inland Sea.

(2) The FIRST Striking Force

The major portion of this force, composed of BATDIV's ONE and THREE, CRUDIV's FOUR, FIVE and SEVEN, DESRON's TWO and TEN, arrived in the Lingga-Singapore area around the end of July. It remained in that area until October 18th when it sortied for the ill-fated battle of October 25th. It was reinforced prior to this time by BATDIV TWO, CRUDIV SIXTEEN, and MOGAMI.

The Main Force and the FIRST Striking Force continued their training in their respective areas. On October 6th, when intelligence was received that Allied planes, China-based, were going to attack the Empire, the Main Force, because of bad weather,\*\* and probably as a consequence of this dispatch\*\*\* discontinued training, returned to the Kure-Iwakuni area and engaged in final preparations for the sortie which was to be ordered when the Allies made their expected attack somewhere on the Japanese defense line, but most probably in the Philippines. On the other hand, the FIRST Striking Force in the Lingga area continued extensive training during this time. This training consisted primarily of exercises in night battle, and of exercises designed against Allied landing operations. It also consisted of training in the employment of radar and in anti-aircraft defense.\*\*\*\* Such specialized training was in support of the "destruction" objective assigned the FIRST Striking Force.

(b) Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (Submarine Force),  
Operations prior to October 10th.

On August 20th CinC, Combined Fleet issued Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 87, "The Outline for Advance Expeditionary Force Operations in the SHO Operations."\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\* Commander Sasebo Naval Base Dispatch 061256, October 1944 to Sasebo Naval Base, CinC, Combined Fleet, SECOND Air Fleet, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 9, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita, IJN, Vol I, page 34.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 87, August 20th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).



He assigned the Advance Force the following objectives: (a) the interception of the enemy task force and landing force in the vicinity of the landing area, and (b) the support of friendly surface forces' attacks in the landing area. Other than in objective (b) above, the submarines were, while engaged in interception, patrol, anti-submarine and enemy supply line cutting operations, not to attack in strength.\*

Thus the submarines, in conformity with the basic SHO concept, were to conserve their strength until the enemy launched amphibious operations, at which time they were to participate in the all-out attack by Japanese forces.

The Japanese had lost a large number of submarines during the Saipan operations.\*\* Subsequently they retired to the Inland Sea, where, except for a few engaged in operational transport to by-passed areas, and four engaged in cutting supply lines in the Indian Ocean, they were being repaired or modernized during the summer.

At the beginning of September, the submarines of the Combined Fleet, totalling thirty-two, were organized into four forces - the FIRST, SEVENTH, EIGHTH and ELEVENTH.

(a) The FIRST Submarine Force, consisting of nine I Class and four RO Class, based in the Inland Sea under repair and conducting post-repair trials.

(b) The SEVENTH Submarine Force, consisting of two I Class, was engaged in transporting supplies to the outlying islands.

(c) The EIGHTH Submarine Force, consisting of two I Class and two RO Class based at Penang, and one I Class under overhaul in Japan, were engaged in commerce destroying operations in the Indian Ocean and,

(d) The ELEVENTH Submarine Force, consisting of ten I Class and two RO Class, was in the Inland Sea conducting shakedown cruises.\*\*

As a result of the Allied landings on Palau and Morotai in mid-September, 1944, five submarines (I-177, RO-41, RO-43, RO-46, RO-47) of the FIRST Submarine Force were dispatched to that area to conduct interception operations.\*\* During the air strikes by TF 38 during the latter part of September, they were diverted to the area off Lamon Bay, Luzon. On September 24th, since no attacks on TF 38 were considered possible, they were returned to the Palau-Morotai area. On October 3rd,

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 87, August 20th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* Japanese Submarine Operations, Philippine Waters, 1944-1945, Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-15.



the RO-41 torpedoed the SHELTON (DE) off Morotai. On October 5th, these submarines were ordered to return to the Inland Sea, making a two-submarine reconnaissance (RO-46 and I-177) of Ulithi while en route. The RO-46, reported on October 7th that an enemy force consisting of one carrier, several cruisers, ten destroyers and thirteen transports was at Ulithi.\* But three of the above five submarines, the RO-41, RO-43 and RO-46 finally reached Japan. The RO-47 was lost about November 2nd, the I-177 about November 8th both in the Palau area.\*\*

Since the submarines did not actively participate in the operations prior to 0719, October 17th, their movements during this period will be discussed under "CinC, Combined Fleet."

(c) Alert on October 9th

On October 9th the shooting down by an Allied patrol plane of a Japanese plane searching to the eastward caused the Commander, Sasebo Naval District to conclude that the plane had been destroyed by carrier planes and awakened him to possible Allied action against Kyushu and Nansei Shoto. He therefore alerted the subordinate commands within his district - the Sasebo Naval District included Kyushu and the Nansei Shoto - and directed them to tighten the air raid alerts especially at dawn.\*\*\* Whether or not he informed CinC, Combined Fleet of this action is not known, but it does not appear that any specific warning was sent out by that commander at this time. Perhaps CinC, Combined Fleet felt that the ships of the Combined Fleet within the Sasebo Naval District had already been alerted by the action of the District Commander. Perhaps he felt that, since Allied air action by carrier task forces, as well as by China-based air forces, had been expected for some time\*\*\*\* all units of his command within the Empire were already alerted to the possibility of Allied air strikes.

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\* Material for Situation Estimates, First Section Naval General Staff October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).

\*\* The Imperial Japanese Navy In World War II, List of Combatant and Non-Combatant Vessels Lost or Damaged in the War, prepared by Military History Section Special Staff GHQ, FEC, February, 1952.

\*\*\* Commander Sasebo Naval Base Dispatch 100100, October 1944 to All Units Sasebo Naval District, WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 102102, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161437; also Commander Takao Air Base Dispatch 061946, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161437.



(2) Operations of Combined Fleet and FOURTH Air Army

(1) Operations on October 10th.

(a) Operations of CinC, Combined Fleet

About 0730, October 10th, CinC, Combined Fleet received word that repeated air strikes by carrier planes were being made against all key points in Okinawa\* as well as against all key points on certain lesser islands of the Nansei Shoto. It should be pointed out that, at this time, CinC, Combined Fleet was not at his headquarters at Hiyoshi, but was instead on an inspection trip of the southern areas and was presently at Shinchiku Air Base on Formosa (his dispatches originated from there). He was accompanied by but two members of his staff - his Deputy Chief of Staff and his Staff Air Officer.\*\* From this it would appear that he had not expected any Allied carrier air strikes of consequence at this time, and had therefore been caught by surprise by the power of the Allied air attack. This is somewhat surprising for as has been pointed out previously in detail CinC, Combined Fleet had forecast:

(1) That there would probably be Allied air strikes after October 4th.

(2) That the Allies would probably attempt a landing during or after the last ten days in October. In preparation for this Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in Formosa had directed that all preparations by his command for countering this invasion be completed by October 15th\*\*\* and,

(3) That these landing operations would be preceded by major scale carrier-based air strikes in southern Kyushu, Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippines.

Since that was his estimate, should it not have been clear to him that October 10th was likely to be within the carrier air strike time zone and that he properly should have remained at his headquarters where his staff and information sources were, rather than to have commenced

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\* Commander Okinawa Base Force Dispatch 100700, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, Commander SECOND Air Fleet, etc., WDC Document 160369.

\*\* Statements of Japanese Officials on World War II, Vol IV Military History Section FEC, page 20, Statement of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, IJN.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 13, September 27th, 1944, issued from Headquarters at Kanoya, Southern Kyushu, Documents from file of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



an inspection trip which took him away from his command center at a most critical time? Actually, in view of the fact that he was the CinC, Combined Fleet, it is not improbable that he was with his subordinate, the Commander SIXTH Base Air Force,\* who was in the process of moving his headquarters to Takao, Formosa, but who had not as yet organized adequately his intelligence section.\*\* However, he left the following command instructions to his Chief of Staff: "After careful consultation with the Navy General Staff, the necessary decisions and orders should be issued from Hiyoshi headquarters in the name of the CinC, Combined Fleet."\*\*\* The Chief of Staff who had remained at Hiyoshi then, in pursuance of these instructions, consulted the Navy General Staff and arrived at the conclusion that, for the present at least, these strikes were no more than carrier strikes and that only the southern Kyushu, Nansei Shoto, Formosa area was endangered. He therefore, in the absence of the CinC, Combined Fleet but in accordance with prearranged plans, at 0902, commenced moving air units from other parts of Japan to join the "T" Force, which was in southern Kyushu, and directed the Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force, which was in the Tokyo area to stand by to move his entire operational strength to southern Kyushu.\*\*\*\*

At 0925 the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet alerted SHO Two for base air forces only;\*\*\*\*\* at 0930 he directed the Commander SIXTH Base Air Force to scout the general enemy situation and when a favorable opportunity occurred, to attack and destroy the enemy,\*\*\*\*\* and at

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\* Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 115, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN, page 501, and War Diary 25th Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\* Statements of Japanese Officials on World War II, Vol IV, Military History, Section FEC, page 20, Statement of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, IJN, October 10th, 1949.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100902, October 1944 to Combined Fleet (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 330), Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100925, October 1944, apparently to Base Air Forces, Combined Fleet (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 331), Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100930, October 1944, apparently to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 332), Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



0935 he advised the Combined Fleet that Okinawa had been hit at 0640 by "several tens of enemy carrier planes" and directed Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces to make searches from Garan Bi, Toimisaki, Shinchiku and Manila.\* These dispatches were received probably prior to 1000 by CinC, Combined Fleet in Formosa who evidently approved them, for he did not cancel them.

At 1019 the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet, also in accordance with prearranged plans, issued an order of transcending importance.\*\* He directed that all operational planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR were to complete preparations for land-based operations and were then to stand by for additional orders. This clearly indicated that these planes were to be land-based during the present operations. It would be interesting to discover why CinC, Combined Fleet authorized his Chief of Staff to issue such instructions during his absence from Hiyoshi even on the advice of the Navy Section of Imperial General Headquarters. He must have realized the importance of his carriers in support of his naval operations and he must have realized further that without aircraft his carriers were useless except as targets which might be employed to draw off Allied air power from vital areas. In fact, as has been pointed out previously, he had assigned as one of the objectives of his Main Force the facilitation of the penetration of the FIRST Striking Force into the Allied landing area by engaging the Allied forces in a flank attack. How he proposed to accomplish this without carrier aircraft is nowhere explained. The answer seems to be that:

(a) CinC, Combined Fleet, prior to his departure on his inspection trip of the southern areas, had prepared a tentative plan which provided for the activation of SHO One or Two for the base air forces alone should the situation be favorable for such action. His Chief of Staff was merely carrying out that preliminary phase of this tentative plan which provided for the employment of his carrier based planes from land bases. This was also a provision of the Combined Fleet SHO plans as will be discussed under Commander Mobile Force.

(b) CinC, Combined Fleet felt that he had no alternative to shorebasing his carrier groups as his carrier pilots had not completed their flight training in so far as the carriers were concerned. He stated later "Many of the pilots had not received sufficient training and, therefore, while they could take off from the carriers, were

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100935, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 333), Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101019, October 1944, apparently to Combined Fleet (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 334), WDC Document 160258.



not always able to get back to the carriers successfully."\*

(c) By directing these planes to prepare for land-based operations he was not irrevocably committing them to operations under the base air forces at this time. He was only moving them into positions from which he could operate them as base air forces should that later become desirable and from which, so long as they remained in the Kyushu area, he could easily return them to their carriers. While it seems reasonably clear that he had already decided to fight a decisive action with his base air forces including the carrier air groups from Kyushu, should the opportunity present itself, at least his actions at this time did not make it impossible to return the carrier groups to their ships for ship-based operations.

If such was the mental process of CinC, Combined Fleet, and all available evidence supports the conclusion that it was, it was of doubtful correctness. The Japanese had already learned in the Solomon operations of 1942-1943 where they had committed their carrier aircraft to the defense of Rabaul and had had it destroyed in the operations around Port Moresby, Buna, and Santa Cruz, that their fleet was seriously handicapped in its freedom of action and in its striking power by the absence of its carrier aircraft.

In addition, while CinC, Combined Fleet was not technically committing his carrier groups to land-based operations, the fact nevertheless remains that, in stopping the carrier training of those groups commencing October 10th, he was in fact committing them to such land-based operations, or at least to increasingly ineffective carrier operations.

It should be pointed out here that the actual mechanics of getting on and off a carrier safely are merely the means to an end. The end achieved is the placing of the aircraft in a position to apply its military potential, and the return of the aircraft so that it may be readied to repeat. Launching and landing are therefore the basic maneuvers of the carrier pilot and demand constant attention in training in order that individual proficiency and over-all coordination may be attained and maintained.\*\* Much of the preliminary training should be done ashore. Carrier take-off, rendezvous, departure, break-up and landing procedures should be simulated during day and night operations from shore bases insofar as air traffic at the base will permit.\*\*\* It is presumed, from their presence aboard the carriers and from the statement of CinC, Combined Fleet,\* that the pilots had completed the

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\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 75, Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Soemu Toyoda, IJN, Vol II, page 317.

\*\* Manual of Training Exercises Carrier Type Aircraft 1946, USF 50, Chapter One, para. A.

\*\*\* Tactical and Operational Instructions Carrier Aircraft 1948, USF 73, para. 215.



land-based phases of their training. Now they were conducting carrier-based training and were "almost trained."\*

This was particularly applicable to the pilots of the four carriers of CARDIV THREE. As late as September 10th Commander Mobile Force had stated that "all aircraft of CARDIV THREE air units will be capable of daytime carrier operation by the middle ten days of October."\*\* In November in his action report on the Battle for Leyte Gulf he infers that the 653rd Air Group had been completely trained and that he would have accomplished much better results had he been allowed to retain them instead of being forced to transfer them to land bases, and to use instead a hastily formed air group.\*\*\* It was also applicable somewhat to the pilots of CARDIV FOUR. COMCARDIV FOUR stated in interrogation that the pilots for the ISE and HYUGA were more or less completely trained, but those for the JUNYO and RYUHO which had been added to his command were not adequately trained and therefore did not participate in the operation.\*\*\*\*

Does it not appear that the Japanese carrier pilots who, while not fully trained, "were almost trained," and who could at least take off from a carrier were more important to the defense effort and to the SHO plans than were carrier pilots committed to land operations and who constituted but a small percentage (possibly fifteen per cent) of the Army and Navy pilots so committed?

And does it not seem also that with the prospect always in view of the activation of SHO One and SHO Two that every opportunity should have been employed to complete the training of the carrier pilots rather than to toss those opportunities away by land basing the planes and stopping the carrier training at the very moment of the pilots greatest training need?

At 1035, the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet advised the Combined Fleet that, depending on the movements of the Allied carrier forces, he expected that CinC, Combined Fleet would activate SHO Two for the Base Air Forces and that it was his (the Chief of Staff's) intention to keep

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\* The Campaigns of the Pacific War, USSBS Naval Analysis Division, page 283.

\*\* Memorandum FIRST Mobile Fleet Headquarters Concerning Tactical Organization of Mobile Force, September 10th, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Japanese, Microfilm HS-26, Item A.

\*\*\* Mobile Force Main Body Detailed Action Report SHO One Operation, October 20th-29th, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744, page 42.

\*\*\*\* USSBS NAV No. 69 Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Chiaki Matsuda, IJN, Vol I, page 277.



the Mobile Force (less carrier aircraft) in stand by in its present dispositions.\*

This dispatch by the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet is highly illuminating. It supports the view above expressed that the concept of destroying Allied carriers by aircraft alone had already been approved by CinC, Combined Fleet as his accepted primary policy in the event that a favorable opportunity to destroy Allied carriers by air strength alone presented itself. How this policy was laid down is nowhere stated. It is presumed however, that since the Allied amphibious forces had been reported at Hollandia the previous day, and since no other reports had been received concerning the location or movement of these or other amphibious forces, the Chief of Staff considered that these air strikes were pure raiding operations with no immediate landings in prospect and, therefore, the employment of the base air forces against them was authorized.

At about 1130, CinC, Combined Fleet received a dispatch from the SIXTH Base Air Force which indicated (a) that the SIXTH Base Air Force had commenced morning search operations from Kanoya as per schedule, (b) that it had not as yet succeeded in locating the enemy and was still searching, (c) that an afternoon search would be launched, and (d) that the "T" Force would retire to its bases in northern Kyushu where it would complete attack preparations.\*\*

As the Allied strikes continued and as reports indicated the number of planes which had attacked and were still attacking Okinawa,\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet appears to have decided that perhaps these strikes were more than had been envisaged by his Chief of Staff; that they were in fact those which had been forecast; that they were possibly the prelude to an actual invasion somewhere, but most probably in the Philippines.

He decided therefore that the Philippines should also be alerted and at 1204, from Formosa, he alerted SHO One and Two, also for the base air forces only.\*\*\*\*

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\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101035, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, WDC Document 161005.

\*\* Kanoya Air Base (Senior Staff Officer, SIXTH Base Air Force) Dispatch 101112, October 1944, Detailed Patrol and Action Report No. 5, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group, October 4th-11th, 1944, WDC Document 161437 NA Index 12447.

\*\*\* Commander Okinawa Base Force Dispatch 101020, October 1944, to CinC, Combined Fleet, WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101204, October 1944 to Combined Fleet (Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd 5), WDC Document 101605.



The action of CinC, Combined Fleet in alerting SHO One and Two for the base air forces only was not in conflict with his plans for the SHO Operations. These plans stated:

"(a) In the event the opportunity to destroy the enemy presents itself, however, land-based air units may, with no outside support, detect and attack enemy aircraft carriers. In this case the SHO One Air Operation will be ordered.\*

"(b) If there is an opportunity to destroy the Allied carrier force through the use of air alone, CinC, Combined Fleet may, at times, order SHO One (or Two or Three....) Air Operations Warning or he may order the execution of such SHO One (or Two or Three....).\*

"(c) In the course of SHO Operations if the Base Air Forces alone are to undertake action the order 'Base Air Forces commence SHO Operations' will be issued by Combined Fleet Headquarters."\*\*

It should be emphasized here that the above quoted plans for alerting as well as activating the SHO Operations for the Base Air Forces only, applied solely to the Navy. The inclusion of these provisions in the Navy plans was evidently within the competence of CinC, Combined Fleet provided that their inclusion did not thereby interfere with the joint operations at the time of an enemy landing or militate against the successful conclusion of such operations.

Present available information indicates that no such provisions were included in the Army plans.

In fact CG, Southern Army had endeavored, after the TF 38 air raids on the Philippines in September, to obtain such authority on the grounds that (a) attacks on enemy task forces by the air force (Army) must be authorized, since to do otherwise would be disadvantageous to the SHO One Operations and (b) by checking the Allied task forces in their early stages it would be possible to carry out freely the Japanese plans while at the same time, disrupting the enemy's plans. This request had been disapproved by Imperial General Headquarters which stated that (a) attacks against enemy task forces were not sure to succeed and (b) such attacks might decrease Japanese strength and interfere with joint operations at the time of enemy landing. However, Imperial General Headquarters did authorize elements of the air force (Army) to carry out such attacks at opportune moments.\*\*\*

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\* Japanese Studies in World War II, Naval Operations in the Philippines 1942-1945, Army Historical Section G-2, GHQ, FEC.

\*\* Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Part I, Outline of Operations, ATIS Document 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* Southern Army Operations 1941-45, First Demobilization Bureau Monograph, Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-21.



Why then if Imperial General Headquarters did not approve activating the Army air forces against enemy carrier task forces did they approve activating the Navy's base air forces against these same task forces? The answer seems to have been that since, under the central agreement, the Navy's principal objective as derived by CinC, Combined Fleet\* was the destruction of enemy carrier task forces, and the Army's principal objective was the destruction of enemy transports at the point of landing, it seemed logical to permit the Navy to accomplish their objective when they wished, providing of course that, in so doing, they did not, as has been stated previously, interfere with the joint operations at the time of enemy landing or militate against the successful conclusion of such operations.

This decision of Imperial General Headquarters does not appear sound since it seems clear that such unilateral operations by one service (Navy) might well force the other service (Army) to come to its support and thereby force the undeclared activation of the total air force of the other service. This might then force the commitment of all air forces, both Army and Navy, in a designated area in advance of the activation of a designated SHO Operation and might well insure the defeat of that SHO plan.

As will be shown later this did in fact occur but to a lesser degree. The Army air forces in the Philippines did come to the support of the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, thereby lessening their efforts during the decisive battles some days later.

CinC, Combined Fleet awaited information from his morning search planes flying out of Kyushu and Okinawa but received none. This was because the Kyushu search planes which returned to base about 1340 had failed to make contact on TF 38 although the visibility was satisfactory, and because three of the four Okinawa search planes had been destroyed presumably by Allied fighters and the fourth plane had returned because of engine trouble. The Okinawa planes, had they completed their search, should have returned about 1300.

Some time around noon he received a dispatch which reported that at 1100 that day Balikpapan had been struck by 100 B-24's escorted by thirty P-38's and that twenty B-24's had been shot down and twenty-three damaged.\*\* This dispatch may have been of interest to him as it indicated a continued possibility of Allied action against the southern Philippines.

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Operations Order No. 84, August 1st, 1944 and Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, First Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).



At 1241, at Shinchiku Air Base, he decided that it was not enough to alert the base air forces for SHO One and SHO Two, but that he should, in addition, clarify the extent to which the units of the FIFTH Base Air Force were to be committed should SHO Two be activated for the base air forces. The basic plan called for committing the major part of the FIFTH Base Air Force.\* He therefore advised his command that (a) in case SHO Two was activated for the base air forces the Commander FIFTH Base Air Force would, in the absence of special orders, continue operations in the Philippines and western Carolines areas and (b) that, depending on the situation a part of the FIFTH Base Air Force, would participate in the SHO Two Operation.\*\* He did not state how this participation was to be effected because Imperial General Headquarters had already directed that the command relations between the FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces were to be through cooperation.\*

Meanwhile, at about 1245, he received a report from Okinawa that about thirty enemy planes had, at 1200, commenced a third attack on Okinawa.\*\*\*

At 1406 he received Commander SIXTH Base Air Forces's dispatch outlining that commander's plans.\*\*\*\* This dispatch advised the SIXTH Base Air Force that its commander planned first, to determine the nature of the present situation and second, at a favorable opportunity, to destroy the enemy carrier force. It also stated that should SHO Two be activated, operations would be in accordance with previously established policies, whereas should there be simultaneous activation of SHO One and SHO Two, or the activation of SHO One only, the Commander SIXTH Base Air Force planned to destroy first, the Allied carrier force operating off Nansai Shoto and second, the Allied carrier force attacking Formosa; after which he planned to carry out decisive battle operations in the Philippines.

This dispatch is included here in the discussion of CinC, Combined Fleet's actions on October 10th because it appears to reflect the views of that commander. It will be remembered that CinC, Combined Fleet was at Shinchiku, Formosa but whether the Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was with him or was at Takao is not known. However, it seems clear that these two commanders were, at the very least, in telephonic communication with each other since telephonic communications were in

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\* Imperial General Headquarters Navy Section Directive No. 435, July 26th, 1944, High-level Planning for SHO Operations, WDC Document 216769.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101241, October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders (Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd No. 6), WDC Document 160264.

\*\*\* Commander Okinawa Base Force Dispatch 101215, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 101406, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.



effect between Takao and Shinchiku Air Base and were being employed by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in issuing directives.\* Therefore, it seems highly probable that they discussed the developing situation and that this dispatch is the result of that discussion. Is this not particularly likely when it is also remembered that neither of them had competent staffs on Formosa since the majority of the members of both staffs were at Hiyoshi (Combined Fleet), and at Kanoya (SIXTH Base Air Force)? And finally does not the subject matter of this dispatch reflect the views of a commander-in-chief rather than the views of a subordinate commander? If we accept these conclusions we are forced to arrive at the opinion previously expressed that CinC, Combined Fleet considered that the Allied carrier strikes were a forerunner of an invasion somewhere but most probably in the Philippines.

At about 1426, also because of his proximity to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, he knew that that commander had directed his units to strengthen their patrols and to employ every available means to ascertain and keep track of the over-all enemy situation by making day and night searches from southern Kyushu, and day searches from Kikai Jima, Ishigaki Jima, Miyako Jima and other bases.\*\*

At about 1430 he received a dispatch from Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla wherein that commander stated (a) that the Oroku sector of Okinawa was being continuously attacked by enemy carrier planes, (b) that two hundred enemy aircraft had attacked so far, and (c) that the Allied carrier task force had not as yet been located.\*\*\* He took no direct action on this dispatch but permitted his chief of staff to continue to effectuate his tentative plan.

That his chief of staff appreciated this responsibility is apparent for at 1503 that officer directed Commander Mobile Force (a) to prepare to sortie the SECOND Striking Force and CARDIV FOUR, (b) to expedite such preparations and (c) to incorporate CARDIV FOUR (less air units) into the SECOND Striking Force on sortie.\*\*\*\*

The action of the (Chief of Staff) Combined Fleet in ordering the reinforced SECOND Striking Force to prepare to sortie seems sound. He hoped thereby, if the Allied carrier attacks made it necessary, to lure

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 122300, October 1944, 762nd Air Group Detailed Action Report No. 6, WDC Document 160579 NA 12297.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 101426, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, etc. Forwarded by GHQ, FEC letter January 10th, 1952 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* Flag 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 101403 to CinC, Combined Fleet, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101503, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 336), WDC Document 161715.



the Allied carrier task force away from the Nansei Shoto where Japanese air power was weak, and into the range of Kyushu-based planes, where Japanese air power was strong, and he also hoped, through the strikes of his land-based aircraft, to damage some of the Allied ships so seriously that it would be feasible for his SECOND Striking Force, under the cover of this land-based aircraft, to sink these damaged ships through raiding operations. It should be remembered here that the FOURTH Carrier Division consisted of the two hermaphrodite battleships, ISE and HYUGA, with eight fourteen-inch guns each, and that, although they had flight decks, they had not as yet operated carrier aircraft from them. Therefore the SECOND Striking Force in this case was essentially a pure surface force.

At about 1500 he received a dispatch from Kanoya Air Base which stated that the morning search, which had returned at 1339, had failed to locate the enemy.\* This was followed at about 1523 by a report from Kume Shima (off Okinawa) that twenty carrier aircraft were overhead\*\* and at about 1625 by a report from Commander Okinawa Base Force that the third enemy air attack had been driven off at 1445, and the fourth attack had commenced at 1500 employing thirty carrier aircraft.\*\*\*

At about 1630 he received a dispatch estimate of the situation,\*\*\*\* prepared by Commander SW Area Fleet who was based at Manila, wherein that commander referred to that day's air attacks on the Nansei Shoto and stated that, although the information as to enemy strength was incomplete, there were, in his opinion, more than two carrier groups operating together with a possibility of one more carrier group operating separately. In this estimate Commander SW Area Fleet arrived at the conclusion that there was a strong possibility that the objective of the Allied carrier operations (presently attacking Okinawa) was to cut the Japanese supply lines and to prepare the way for landing operations in the southern Philippines. He therefore estimated that, if this was a correct analysis, air attacks by the Allied carrier force would be made on Formosa and on the Philippines. He based this conclusion on the following factors (a) the Allied air attacks on Okinawa, (b) the concentration of enemy ships reported in the western New Guinea area (it is assumed that he was referring to the report concerning six carriers, four battleships, ten cruisers, over twenty destroyers and over 200

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\* Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 101433, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 161437.

\*\* Kume Shima Lookout Post Dispatch 101510, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\* Commander Okinawa Base Force Dispatch 101515, October 10th, 1944 to Ships and Stations receiving Enemy Intelligence Reports, WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\*\* CofS, SW Area Fleet Dispatch 101554, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, WDC Document 161638.



large medium and small transports in the Hollandia-Wakde area, and fifty large transports, a large number of medium and small transports, and several cruisers and destroyers in the Biak area), (c) the appearance of enemy submarines east of Luzon and (d) the active Allied air operations against the southern Philippines and Borneo.

It is not known how Commander SW Area Fleet arrived at this estimate, but it is probable that the reports of the attacks on Okinawa were available to him. He knew, therefore, that at least 200 enemy aircraft had, by 1403, attacked Okinawa and that attacks were still underway which attacks had already reported fifty additional Allied planes. Thus, it can be assumed that Commander SW Area Fleet had reason to believe that at least 300 enemy aircraft had attacked already. In view of the fact that the Japanese had considerable general information concerning the Allied carrier force, it seems correct to say that Commander SW Area Fleet could make a round estimate of about sixty-five planes per carrier (ninety-six per CV and thirty-three per CVL), and that about seventy per cent of these planes would be available for attack the first day; the remaining thirty per cent being required for fighter cover, anti-submarine work, services and unavailability. He also probably realized that some of these attacks were repeat attacks by the same planes but not necessarily so. Assuming, for rough estimate purposes, that he ignored this possibility, he could therefore estimate a total of about 430 planes within the carrier task force. This would be the equivalent of seven carriers.

Whether Commander SW Area made an analysis similar to the above and arrived at a similar figure of seven carriers which he divided into not less than three carrier groups, or whether he arrived at more than seven carriers or estimated the number of task groups by some other method such as radio intelligence is not known.

Actually TF 38 had launched some 1396 sorties most of which had attacked targets in the Nansei Shoto area. The planes making these sorties were from seventeen carriers in four task groups.

The reason for inaccuracies is clear. The reports of the numbers of enemy aircraft attacking Okinawa were incomplete, either because of many very incorrect estimates by the local commanders, or because many of the local commanders had failed to report, thus presenting a distorted picture of the nature of the attack and of the size of the attacking Allied carrier force. Part of this failure to obtain a correct estimate of the enemy planes was, of course, due to disrupted communications, but this is not considered to have been the dominating factor, as there were numerous means of communication available.

Between the receipt of Commander SW Area's dispatch estimate and 2230, CinC, Combined Fleet did not receive any information concerning the Allied carrier task force. Although he knew that as late as 1500



it was still attacking, he had heard nothing further from his command concerning the continuing nature of the battle; its results so far; of what the enemy forces consisted, and their course and speed.

However, commencing about 1720 he began to receive reports on two Allied carrier task groups as follows:

(a) At 1533 three carriers bearing 195°(T) distant 350 miles from Toi Misaki (south Kyushu) and,

(b) At 1540 two large carriers about ten cruisers and destroyers bearing 187°(T) distant 400 miles from Toi Misaki.\*

These contacts were what he was waiting for and gave him a certain gratification in that they tended to support the estimates of the enemy composition given by his Commander SW Area Force. On the other hand they probably gave him considerable concern for at least two hours had elapsed between the time of the first contact and its receipt by him and about four hours had elapsed between the second contact and its receipt by him (possibly 1925). This was, of course, excessive. He took no corrective action, however, presumably because he felt that such corrective action was properly within the purview of the responsible commanders and was being taken. In this he was correct for in war, mistakes will inevitably occur. If the commander, at the slightest provocation, manifests lack of confidence in a subordinate's abilities he will seriously affect thereby that mutual understanding and loyalty which should prevail between them.

At 1851, he knew that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was planning night attacks once the enemy had been discovered.\*\*

He knew also, at 1905 that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was planning on the following day to make certain searches from the Okinawa sector employing numbers of aircraft.\*\*\*

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\* Commander Sasebo Naval District Dispatch 102109, October 1944 to All Units Sasebo Naval District, WDC Document 160369; also Material for Situation Estimates, First Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764; also Kikai Island Air Base Dispatch 101650, October 1944; Detailed Action Report No. 2 Northern Attack Force, SECOND Base Air Force, October 10th-November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645 NA 12262.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 101851, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, etc. Forwarded by GHQ, FEC Letter, January 10th, 1952 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* Ibid, Dispatch 101905.



At about 2230, CinC, Combined Fleet received a dispatch, source unknown, which stated that at 2100, radar equipped flying boats had detected surface craft, apparently hostile, on bearing 065°(T) distant 140 miles from Garan Bi.\* Although the contact must have appeared incorrect to him as his scheduled searches had flown over the probable approach tracks, it is assumed that he reorganized that it was an Allied capability to have had one or more task groups in this area. Therefore, he presumably watched this contact to await developments. Actually the contact, as a hostile contact, was in error. No Allied forces, including submarines, were within one hundred miles.

(b) Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 10th.

At about 0730, Commander Mobile Force, who was at his headquarters at Oita Air Base (actually he was at the headquarters of the 653rd Air Group)\*\* and was awaiting there the results of the searches being conducted to discover the Allied carrier force believed to be operating off Kyushu, received word that repeated air strikes were being made against the Nansei Shoto.\*\*\* This was possibly quite a relief to him as carrier strikes on Kyushu might well have endangered his carriers. This possibility was, for the moment, over.

At about 1050 he received a dispatch from CinC, Combined Fleet which directed that all operational planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR were to complete preparations for land-based operations and were then to stand by for additional orders.\*\*\*\*

This was of exceeding interest to him for, although the SHO plans covered this point rather completely, this order seemed to indicate that his carrier planes were to be land-based throughout the forthcoming operations whatever they might be. This would seriously interfere with his plans for the employment of the Main Force should SHO One or Two be activated as seemed not unlikely.

In this connection the fleet operation orders issued in support of the basic GHQ directive for SHO Operations stated:

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- \* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-104; also Material for Situation Estimates First Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document No. 216764 (Microfilm).
  - \*\* War Diary Commander Mobile Force, October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 160341 NA 11404.
  - \*\*\* Commander Okinawa Base Force Dispatch 100700, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, etc. WDC Document 160369.
  - \*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101019, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, etc. (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 334), Document from file of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-18, Item B.



(a) "In certain circumstances and by special order the carrier air force may deploy at base as a base air force and participate in the operations.\*

(b) "In certain circumstances and by special order, diversionary movements may be carried out accompanied by a carrier upon which there are no airplanes.\*

(c) "In SHO Operation Two, and at other advantageous times, carrier-based air units may be assigned to land bases and put under the command of the commanding officers of the base air forces."\*\*

(d) In the outline for the concentration of the base air forces for SHO Operations the employment on shore of the carrier-based planes, should they be so employed, showed them to have been assigned for all SHO Operations as follows: SHO One, southern Kyushu; SHO Two, southern Kyushu; SHO Three, central Honshu and areas adjacent to the Inland Sea; SHO Four, Hokkaido area.\*\*\*

Whether or not Commander Mobile Force made any representations concerning the land-basing of his planes is not known, but it does not appear that he did. He seems to have been of the opinion that, as there was no certainty where the enemy would strike next, his planes would be safer ashore than on the carriers, and as they were to be employed, at the worst, in southern Kyushu, he felt this was a reasonable temporary employment. He knew that Kyushu was a likely target on the following day for Allied carrier planes, although based on previous estimates, not so likely a target as Formosa, and he knew that attacks on Kyushu might seriously endanger his carriers in the Inland Sea. Therefore, until this danger had passed, the land-basing of his planes seemed not only logical but appropriate since they were of but limited value on the carriers if the carriers were underway (the Inland Sea offered little maneuvering room for combat operations), and were of no value if the carriers were anchored or moored.

He also was of the opinion that so long as his planes remained on land bases nearby (particularly at Oita, northern Kyushu) he could

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\* Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Section II, Concrete Operational Policy, para. F, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Operation Order No. 1, August 10th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part V, May 28th, 1945, (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944, Appendix II (Outline For Concentration of Base Air Forces for SHO Operations) ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945, (NACHI Document).



readily continue the flight training during peaceful periods, by operating the planes between the land bases and the carriers. He had been doing this for the past week. As will be pointed out later, he had no expectation that his planes might be otherwise employed and might not be returned to his carriers should SHO One or Two be activated, although, CinC, Combined Fleet's instructions that his planes were "to stand by for additional orders," might well have caused him some mental agitation.\* It seems reasonable to assume that Commander Mobile Force was not fully cognizant of his commander-in-chief's plans for the future employment of these planes from land bases.

At about 1100 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet wherein he was advised that (a) depending on the movements of the enemy task force attacking Okinawa, SHO Two would probably be activated for the Base Air Forces, and (b) it was the CinC, Combined Fleet's present intention to maintain the Mobile Force, less its carrier aircraft, in a stand by condition in its present dispositions.\*\*

Although there is no direct information that Commander Mobile Force took any action with relation to these two dispatches there is considerable indication that he did as Commander Main Force. For Commander Mobile Force was also Commander Main Force and he issued instructions as that commander. In addition, since Commander SECOND Striking Force was near by at Iwakuni, necessary instructions were often given by telephone.

At about 1530 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch which directed him (a) to prepare to sortie the SECOND Striking Force and CARDIV FOUR and (b) to expedite preparations to incorporate CARDIV FOUR (less air units) in SECOND Striking Force on sortie.\*\*\* This was a clear departure from SHO plans which called for the simultaneous employment of all surface forces against an Allied landing. However, any concern which he may have had was dispelled a few minutes later for, at about 1545, he was advised by the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet by dispatch that the reason for this contemplated sortie was (a) to draw the Allied carrier force towards Kyushu in case that force carried out a persistent and prolonged attack in the Nansei Shoto area and (b) to exploit any favorable opportunity created by the operations of the base air force.\*\*\*\*

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\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, IJN, to Mr. Clarke H. Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, U.S. Naval War College, no date, but about May 23rd, 1952.

\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101035, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force etc., WDC Document 161005.

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101503, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, WDC Document 161715.

\*\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101512, October 1944 to Commander Force, WDC Document 161715.



This action of the Chief of Staff was unusual based on American procedures. However, as the Chief of Staff issued amplifying and explanatory dispatches continually, and as the chiefs of staff of other Japanese commands - notably of the SIXTH Base Air Force - did likewise, it was an authorized procedure, or, if not an authorized procedure, it was at least an approved custom.

American procedure did not permit such amplifying dispatches,\* and does not permit it today.\*\* Instead, such dispatches would be issued in the name of the commander and the recipient would consider them as from that commander no matter who composed them or released them. This maintains the structure of command.

Throughout the day, Commander Mobile Force continued to receive the various dispatches sent out from Okinawa concerning the attacks on that place by the Allied carrier task force. Among these was the Commander SW Area Fleet's estimate of the situation as of 1554. However, except for this estimate, he had no important information other than his own estimates and the fact (a) that should SHO One or Two be activated, his planes would be ordered to southern Kyushu and (b) his SECOND Striking Force was being prepared for sortie.

At 2136 he directed the Commander SECOND Striking Force and CARDIV FOUR to expedite sortie preparations and cancelled the dispatch of the four destroyers to Oita, Iwakuni and Tokushima which he had ordered at 1500. (This was, of course, to insure that the SECOND Striking Force would be available in full strength). In this dispatch he advised the Mobile Force that at the time of sortie, which would be fixed by special order, CARDIV FOUR (less air units) would be incorporated in the SECOND Striking Force. He likewise advised that he would take direct command of the 634th Air Group from CARDIV FOUR.\*\*\*

He took no further important action during the remainder of the day.

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 10th.

This force, consisting of BATDIV's ONE, TWO and THREE, CRJDIV's FOUR, FIVE, SEVEN and SIXTEEN and DESRON's TWO and part of DESRON TEN was in the Lingga-Singapore area on October 10th where it was conducting training exercises. As has been pointed out previously

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\* Communication Instructions USN, 1944, para. 1101.

\*\* Joint Communications Instructions, Part I, General (JANAP 121A) Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chapter V, Message Preparation, para. 1500.

\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 102136, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet and Mobile Force, WDC Document 161636.



this training consisted of exercises in night battle, radar, anti-aircraft defense and exercises against enemy landings.\*

At this time BATDIV ONE was composed of the NAGATO, MUSASHI, YAMATO; BATDIV TWO of the FUSO, YAMASHIRO; BATDIV THREE of the KONGO, HARUNA; CRUDIV FOUR of the heavy cruisers ATAGO, MAYA, TAKAO, CHOKAI; CRUDIV FIVE of the heavy cruisers MYOKO, HAGURO, MOGAMI (assigned for training); CRUDIV SEVEN of the heavy cruisers KUMANO, SUZUYA, CHIKUMA, TONE; CRUDIV SIXTEEN of the heavy cruiser AOBA, the light cruiser KINU, the destroyer URANAMI; DESRON TWO of the light cruiser NOSHIRO and the destroyers KISHINAMI, NAGANAMI, OKINAMI, ASASHIMO of DESDIV THIRTY-ONE, the HAMANAMI, FUJINAMI of DESDIV THIRTY-TWO and the SHIMAKAZE and SHIGURE; DESRON TEN of the light cruiser YAHAGI and the destroyers URAKAZE, HAMAKAZE, YUKIKAZE, ISOKAZE of DESDIV SEVENTEEN; the MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO, NOWAKI of DESDIV FOUR. This was a total of seven battleships, twelve heavy cruisers, three light cruisers and sixteen destroyers.

At this time there was a service force in the Lingga-Singapore area consisting of the FIRST and SECOND Supply Forces and composed of oilers, and escorts as follows: FIRST Supply Force - YUHO MARU (AO), HAKKO MARU (AO), OMUROSAN MARU (AO), ITSUKUSHIMA MARU (AO), MANEI MARU (AO), NIPPO MARU (AO), CHIBURI (PF), YURIJIMA (Cmc), COAST DEFENSE VESSEL #19, COAST DEFENSE VESSEL #27, MINE SWEEPER #34; SECOND Supply Force - NICHIEI MARU (AO), RYOEI MARU (AO), KURAHASHI (PF), COAST DEFENSE VESSEL #32. This service force, with the exception of the NIPPO MARU which was attached to the FIRST Striking Force, was under command of CinC, Combined Fleet. It remained so until the FIRST Striking Force sortied from Lingga-Singapore on October 18th when CinC, Combined Fleet finally transferred the various units to Commander FIRST Striking Force.\*\*

Commander FIRST Striking Force received most of the dispatches concerning the Allied air operations against Okinawa as well as CinC, Combined Fleet dispatches concerning prospective operations for the various forces of his command. He was familiar with the fact that the CinC, Combined Fleet had ordered a SHO One and Two alert for the base air forces, that the planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR were being readied for shore operations and that the SECOND Striking Force plus CARDIV FOUR was making preparations for a sortie.

From the above it was plain that to Commander FIRST Striking Force CinC, Combined Fleet was not expecting an immediate landing by enemy forces and that therefore he (Commander FIRST Striking Force) probably

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\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 9, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Takao Kurita, IJN, Vol I, page 34; also War Diary COMCRUDIV 5, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* Battle Report FIRST Striking Force SHO Operations, October 16th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 161641.



had time to complete training and prepare for possible operations later. However, he did not count on this too heavily for he intensified his training exercises and continued fueling, supplying and docking his ships in preparation for sortie.\*

(2) Operations of Commander Main Force, October 10th.

The Main Force consisting of CARDIV's ONE, THREE and FOUR, plus supporting elements of cruisers and destroyers as designated, had, until October 10th been training in the Inland Sea. The planes of CARDIV THREE were ashore at Oita while those of CARDIV FOUR were ashore at Tokushima and Iwakuni. It is not clear whether the planes for CARDIV THREE were basing ashore at this time and were making qualification landings and take-offs from the carriers by operating from that base, or whether they had merely become shore-based on this date as is often the American custom when carriers are moored at an air base. The planes of CARDIV FOUR were not based on the carriers of CARDIV FOUR, but were based on shore.

CARDIV ONE, which at this time consisted of the UNRYU and AMAGI, was still undergoing training and on October 10th was at Yashima.\*\* The UNRYU had only been completed on August 6th and the AMAGI on August 10th.\*\*\* Neither was ready for combat as late as October 20th.\*\*

CARDIV THREE consisted of the ZUIHO,\*\*\*\* ZUIKAKU,\*\*\*\*\* CHITOSE\*\*\*\*\* and CHIYODA. On October 10th the ZUIHO was at Oita, the CHITOSE and ZUIKAKU were at Kure, the CHIYODA's location is not known. CARDIV FOUR consisted of the ISE, HYUGA, JUNYO and RYUHO. The ISE and HYUGA, which were at Kure,\*\*\*\*\* were the only ships of the CARDIV that participated in the Battle for Leyte Gulf. Therefore, the JUNYO and RYUHO will be dropped from further consideration.

It seems pertinent to point out here again that Commander Main Force was also Commander Mobile Force and therefore was familiar with the Mobile Force plans. Why CinC, Combined Fleet assigned the direct

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\* War Diary CRUDIV 5, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739; also Battle Summary FIRST Striking Force Detailed Action Report for SHO Operations, October 1944, WDC Document 161641 Group 17, Item 17B

\*\* Tabular Records of Japanese Carriers, WDC Document 160677 NA 11792 and WDC Document 160623 NA 11784.

\*\*\* Japanese Naval Vessels at the End of the War, Compiled by Shizuo, Fukui, Administrative Division SECOND Demobilization Bureau, April 25th, 1947.

\*\*\*\* War Diary ZUIHO, October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 161636 NA 11973.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary ZUIKAKU October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 161636 NA 11973.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CHITOSE October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 161636 NA 11973.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary HYUGA October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 161636 NA 11973.



command of the Main Force to his Commander Mobile Force is not known, for it caused that officer to command on two echelons. In view of the fact that Commander Mobile Force was, at the same time, commanding the FIRST and SECOND Striking Forces as major forces under his over-all command, this direct command of the Main Force could have resulted in his becoming so engrossed in the tactical details of the Main Force's operations as to overlook possibly his basic responsibility as Commander Mobile Force.

At 1500 he directed the 634th Air Group and the 653rd Air Group to expedite preparations for the transfer of the air groups to southern Kyushu. (This was in accordance with SHO plans One and Two for the employment on shore of carrier-based planes), and he advised the command that Commander SECOND Striking Force, in order to assist in this transfer, was dispatching two destroyers (including HATSUHARU) to Oita, and, in order to assist CARDIV FOUR in transferring the 634th Air Group, was assigning two destroyers to COMCARDIV FOUR.\*

From these orders issued by Commander Main Force, it is clear that he now realized that the carrier training of his air groups operating from Oita was discontinued for the present. It must also have been clear to him that CinC, Combined Fleet planned to activate SHO Two for the Base Air Forces only, and in that event he would probably be required to employ his carriers without their regularly assigned air groups, utilizing instead such planes and pilots as were available at the time.

At about 1540 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch to Commander Mobile Force wherein that commander was directed to prepare the SECOND Striking Force plus CARDIV FOUR (less air units) for sortie,\*\* and he also received the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet's amplifying directive wherein the situations which would call for such a sortie were set forth.\*\*\*

From 1540 until midnight, Commander Main Force received no important instructions and issued no important orders to his command other than to authorize COMCARDIV FOUR to communicate directly with Commander SECOND Striking Force concerning matters connected with the sortie. It was for this reason that Commander SECOND Striking Force ordered fuel for CARDIV FOUR.\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 101500, October 1944 to Striking Force, COMCARDIV 4 and COM 653rd Air Group, WDC Document 161715.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101503, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 336), WDC Document 161715.

\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101512, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, WDC Document 161715.

\*\*\*\* CofS, SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 102102, October 1944 to Commander Kure Naval District, WDC Document 161715.



(3) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force,  
October 10th.

The SECOND Striking Force consisted, on this day of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, DESRON ONE, DESRON ELEVEN, DESDIV FORTY-ONE and DESDIV SIXTY-ONE.\*

On October 10th this force was either training in the Inland Sea, although the weather there had been bad, or was at base in the Kure area preparing final sortie preparations. For example, DESRON ONE at Kure was installing additional machine guns, unloading non-essential supplies, drydocking and preparing plans for improving the sortie equipment.\* Certain units, such as the KASUMI and HATSUHARU were engaged in special operations.\* The HATSUHARU had been operating with CARDIV THREE in aircraft carrier qualifications.\* DESDIV FORTY-ONE was on detached duty and was at Yokosuka.\*\*

Throughout the day Commander SECOND Striking Force received most of the dispatches concerning the Allied air attacks on Okinawa. As a consequence of the receipt of a dispatch, at about 0730, which reported Okinawa and Amami O Shima being attacked since 0700, he ordered a No. 3 Anti-Aircraft Alert at 0924.\*\*\*

At about 1050, he received word that all operational planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR, which were from the Main Force, were to complete preparations for land-based operations and were to stand by for additional orders.\*\*\*\*

At about 1100, he received a dispatch which indicated that SHO Two would probably be activated for the Base Air Forces and that it was the present intention of CinC, Combined Fleet to maintain the Mobile Force, less its carrier aircraft, in a stand by condition in its present dispositions.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1530, he received instructions from Commander Mobile Force to dispatch immediately two destroyers (including HATSUHARU) to Oita to assist COMCARDIV THREE in transferring the 653rd Air Group to southern Kyushu, and to assign two destroyers to COMCARDIV FOUR to assist in the transfer of the 634th Air Group.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 100924, October 1944 to SECOND Striking Force, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101019, October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 334), Documents from File of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-18, Item B.

\*\*\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101035, October 1944 to Commander Striking Force, WDC Document 161005.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 101500 October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, etc., WDC Document 161715. CONFIDENTIAL



Also at about 1530 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's orders directing that the SECOND Striking Force was to expedite sortie preparations and directing that at the time of sortie CARDIV FOUR would be incorporated into the SECOND Striking Force.\*

At about 1545 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch wherein that commander advised the Mobile Force as to his plans for sorting the SECOND Striking Force.\*\*

Commander SECOND Striking Force now estimated the situation and, after receiving reports from the various units of his command which evidently took considerable time, he decided that it was necessary to fuel his command. He therefore, at 2102, advised Commander Kure Naval District that he desired to fuel fully CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, DESRON ONE, CARDIV FOUR (ISE and HYUGA) and DESRON ELEVEN; indicated the amount of fuel required for each division and squadron, and advised that CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE would reach Kure early the following morning.\*\*\* As he made no provision for fueling DESDIV SIXTY-ONE it is assumed that DESDIV was fully fueled.

At about 2200 he received orders from Commander Mobile Force directing him to expedite sortie preparations and cancelling the dispatch of the four destroyers to assist the carriers in transferring their air groups.\*\*\*\*

(c) Operations of Base Air Forces, October 10th.

(1) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force

As has been noted, when a Kanoya search plane broke off communications with its base and failed to return on October 9th, Commander Sasebo Naval District issued at 0100, October 10th, an alert to all units in southern Kyushu and the Nansei Shoto against the possibility of an air attack.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101503, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 336) WDC Document 161715.
  - \*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101512, October 1944 to FIRST Mobile Fleet, (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 336) WDC Document 161715.
  - \*\*\* CofS, SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 102102, October 1944 to Commander Kure Naval District, WDC Document 161715.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 102136, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet and Mobile Force, WDC Document 161636.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander Sasebo Naval District SigDesOpOrd No. 113 to All Units Sasebo Naval District, October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 160369.



At 0315, three hours before sunrise (sunrise was at 0615), four radar equipped land attack planes of the 708th Attack Unit based at Kanoya departed on routine patrol to search the sector  $132^{\circ}$ - $162^{\circ}$ (T) to 650 miles and, also, to cover the area to the east of this sector between bearings  $132^{\circ}$ - $112^{\circ}$ (T) distance 500 miles on the west side and 420 miles on the east side. This search had been planned prior to the issuance of the alert\* but, as a result of the alert, its departure was advanced two hours.\*\* It will be observed that this search covered the sector where the lost Kanoya search plane had last been reported on the previous day.

At 0400, units of the "T" Force, which were at bases in southern Kyushu, commenced retiring to more secure bases. This movement was completed at about 0630 and a total of 164 aircraft were dispersed to bases to the north.\*\*

Between 0500 and 0630 a second search departed from Kanoya composed of four land reconnaissance planes of the 141st Air Group to cover the sector  $098^{\circ}$ - $175^{\circ}$ (T) to 300 miles. This search had not been previously scheduled but was an additional precautionary measure resulting from the alert.\*\* It was ineffective as the radius of search and the sector searched were inadequate.

At Okinawa a routine search took off at 0610. Four two-engine land bombers of the TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla were to cover the sector  $122\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ - $162\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ (T) to 650 miles. This was the search scheduled before the Sasebo Naval District alert. One of these four planes returned shortly with engine trouble. The remaining three planes failed to return to base,\*\*\* and were presumably shot down as this search covered the area in which TF 38 was operating.

As at Okinawa, no special action regarding morning searches was taken at Shinchiku, northern Formosa, since Shinchiku was not within the Sasebo Naval District and Commander SIXTH Base Air Force gave no special orders.

Actually but one search was launched from Formosa on the morning of October 10th. This was a routine air search of three land attack planes from the 708th Attack Unit, which was to cover the sector  $119\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ - $164\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ (T) to a distance of 600 miles. Although the search was scheduled to depart at about 0658 only one plane - the center plane - departed at this time. The other two planes failed to depart until much later.

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\* Commander "T" Force Dispatch 091335, October 1944 to authorized ships, WDC Document 161437.

\*\* Memorandum notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* War Diary 25th Air Flotilla, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 160137.



The plane in the southern sector departed at 0807 and covered the full 600 miles; the plane in the northern sector departed at 1007 and covered but 500 miles. Meanwhile the center plane, after covering 110 miles suffered engine trouble and was forced to return to base. A replacement was sent out immediately, but did not depart until 1053 and then returned to base having covered but 350 miles. Although this search was very poorly organized and flown, this had no adverse effect as TF 38 was well to the north of the sector searched.

Thus, it was that on October 10th, prior to the Allied attack on Okinawa, the SIXTH Base Air Force had already effected the following counter operations. It had (a) advanced the regular morning search from Kanoya two hours and (b) it had retired the "T" Force planes from southern Kyushu bases commencing nearly two hours before sunrise.

While it is not clear who directed these operations it appears to have been the Senior Staff Officer, SIXTH Base Air Force at Kanoya since the dispatches originated with him. Is it not logical therefore to assume that this senior staff officer in the absence of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force who was on Formosa, would, upon receiving Commander Sasebo Naval District's alert order, take appropriate action as necessary regarding the SIXTH Base Air Force? This seems to have been in accordance with Japanese practice as evidenced by the actions of CinC, Combined Fleet during this same time. Although the action of the Senior Staff Officer in advancing the departure of the radar equipped aircraft from Kanoya was sound, his failure to direct similar action by Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla on Okinawa is not considered sound. In all fairness it should be pointed out that perhaps the aircraft available on Okinawa were not radar equipped, and were unable to conduct an effective search before daylight. However, if such were indeed the case would it not have been wise to have increased the area searched from Kanoya to cover the approaches to Okinawa with radar equipped aircraft?

The retirement of the "T" Force from the south Kyushu area before dawn on October 10th, was in accordance with the original plan for conserving the strength of the base air forces prior to the time of decisive battle. This action indicates that considerable credence was given to the Allied capability of making an air attack on bases in southern Kyushu at this time. This was not an idle thought for COM THIRDFLT had stated on October 6th that, should the typhoon create the opportunity, he planned to strike Kyushu in lieu of Okinawa.\* Why the Allied capability of making such an attack on Okinawa was not given equal weight and did not dictate taking added measures from that command to insure detection of an enemy force attacking that area is not known. Does it not appear that, if an Allied task force was believed to be approaching the area, the determination of its location, composition, and movement was imperative and warranted maximum search effort?

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Dispatch 060712, October 1944 to CINCPAA.



Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, who was at Takao, was aware of the loss of the Kanoya search plane on October 9th and of the alert in the Sasebo Naval District. He appears to have taken no specific action prior to the attack on Okinawa. It is probable that he felt that the alert he had established for the SIXTH Base Air Force on October 4th was sufficient. On the previous day (October 3rd) he had directed that (a) all units were to maintain an alert status from two hours prior to sunrise until noon each day, (b) patrols were to be launched thirty minutes before sunrise, (c) additional patrol planes were to be ready to take off on thirty minutes notice for additional search or contact scouting, and (d) "T" Force and all combined groups were to be prepared to take off on one hour's notice to attack or to disperse.\* On October 6th he had extended the provisions of this alert indefinitely, and had added that regular sector patrols would be fixed by the respective commanders according to the number of operational patrol planes.\*\*

That Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had complete confidence in his commanders at Kanoya and Okinawa is apparent when it is noted that he did not issue any specific orders for the operation of his forces at those bases during October 10th. His Senior Staff Officer at Kanoya did find it necessary to issue orders for units in that area, but his Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla on Okinawa did not consider that the situation required any modifications of his routine search plans.

At about 0730 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received information that Okinawa was under attack by enemy carrier planes.\*\*\* At this time he had no information whatsoever as to the location of the enemy carrier force or the number of planes attacking Okinawa. He did know, of course, that his searches from Kanoya and Okinawa were scheduled to take off at least one-half hour before sunrise and should have been well on their search course by the time of the attack. He could therefore reasonably expect to receive a contact report shortly. He could also expect that his commander on Okinawa would soon amplify his original report. Actually, since this attack appeared to be the one he had anticipated when he set his alert on October 3rd effective October 4th and had continued indefinitely on October 6th, he directed units of the SIXTH Base Air Force at 0809 to operate in accordance with previous orders.\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 031021, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 061946, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161437.

\*\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 100700, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet; Flag, SIXTH Base Air Force; Flag, SEVENTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 100809, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.



This meant that they were to conserve their strength while preparing to conduct small scale attacks on the enemy task force as conditions might permit.

The first Allied sweep was detected by Japanese radar on Okinawa at 0630, ten minutes before the attack commenced.\*

SIXTH Base Air Force headquarters at Kanoya received the information of the attack on Okinawa at about the same time that their commander received the information on Formosa. By this time (0730) two searches had already departed from Kanoya, but no contacts had been reported.

At about 0830 Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla sent out two carrier-type reconnaissance planes to search for the enemy, the search sectors being unknown. They made no contact; both planes failed to return to base.\*\*

At about 0930 the Kanoya search plane of the second search covering the sector 105°-110°(T) reported sighting a large enemy formation. An air raid alert was ordered. At about 0935 a reconnaissance plane of the 141st Air Group, which had presumably been ordered out prior to receipt of this contact, took off to search the sector 175°-199°(T) to 300 miles. This search was ordered after information regarding the attack on Okinawa had been received and was intended to extend the original coverage of the second morning's search toward Okinawa. At about the same time a reconnaissance plane of the ELEVENTH Recco Unit was sent out to scout the enemy formation reported to the east of Kanoya. At 1010 the contact report was found to be in error due to improper coding and the air raid alert was cancelled. Actually the message had reported a contact,\*\*\* on the submarine GABILAN which, while en route to Bungo Suido, had reported sighting an enemy plane at 0937 in Latitude 30°-05'N, Longitude 134°-49'E. The GABILAN was not attacked.\*\*\*\*

How much information concerning these operations from southern Kyushu was forwarded to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in Formosa is not known, but it is probable that he was not informed of each detail, for, at 1112, his Senior Staff Officer at Kanoya originated a dispatch

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\* Detailed Action Report Oroku Detachment 901st Air Group, October 10th, 1944, WDC Document 160369.

\*\* War Diary Commander 25th Air Flotilla, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report GABILAN, Report of THIRD War Patrol, Serial 031, November 13th, 1944.



wherein he indicated (a) the searches which were then underway but which had not yet located the enemy, (b) the fact that the "T" Force had retired to northern Kyushu bases where it would complete attack preparations and (c) his intention to launch an additional four plane search in the afternoon.\*

In the meantime, subsequent to issuing his order to operate in accordance with previous orders, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received certain orders and information:

(a) At about 0935, CinC, Combined Fleet's order transferring the 501st Attack Unit from the SEVENTH Base Air Force to the "T" Force and directing Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force to stand by to move the entire operational strength of that air force to southern Kyushu.\*\*

(b) About 0955 CinC, Combined Fleet's alert for SHO Two for the base air forces.\*\*\*

(c) At about 1000, orders from CinC, Combined Fleet directing him to scout the enemy situation and, at a favorable opportunity, to attack and destroy him.\*\*\*\*

(d) At about 1005, orders to alert searches from Garan Bi, Toimisaki (Kanoya) and Shinchiku.\*\*\*\*\*

(e) At about 1050, information that Commander Combined Fleet had ordered all operational aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR to complete preparation for land-based operations and stand by.\*\*\*\*\*

\* Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 101112, October 1944 addressees unknown, WDC Document 161437.

\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100902, October 1944 to Combined Fleet (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 330), Documents from File of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100925, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 331), Documents from File of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100930, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH Base Air Forces, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 333), Documents from File of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100935, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH Base Air Force, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 333), WDC Document 161437.

\*\*\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101019, October 1944 to Commanders CARDIV's 3 and 4, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 334), WDC Document 161437.



During the morning, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received no further amplification of the initial dispatch from Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla on Okinawa, although he did receive three meager dispatches from the Base Force Commander at Okinawa. That commander reported (a) at 0940 that several tens of enemy carrier aircraft had attacked Okinawa since 0640,\* (b) at 1020 enemy aircraft had been driven off\*\* and (c) at 1215 a third attack of about thirty enemy aircraft had started at noon.\*\*\* Also at about 1215, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received CinC, Combined Fleet's order alerting the base air forces only for both SHO One and SHO Two.\*\*\*\*

In estimating the situation as it existed at about noon it was obvious to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that he still lacked any specific information other than that the attack on Okinawa was continuing. His commander on Okinawa, Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla, had given him no details from which he could make an estimate of the size of the attack force. While he likely realized that that commander was finding it difficult to counter the attack effectively (his silence supported this belief) he nevertheless necessarily found that he was being seriously handicapped in his ability to estimate the situation and to make decisions because of his failure to receive more complete information. This points out the importance of information to any commander and particularly to top-level commanders who are responsible for making the more important decisions. It further points out the necessity for search commanders to make every effort to obtain such information using all means available, and accepting any losses within the limits of authorized calculated risk to accomplish this objective.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force could not have been surprised by the directive issued by CinC, Combined Fleet. Certainly the order to scout the enemy and at a favorable opportunity attack and destroy him was one which might well have been expected. In this connection it should be remembered that both commanders were on Formosa and were in communication with one another.

While an order to attack the enemy at this time was not in accordance with the basic concept of the conservation of base air force strength prior to an actual landing, it was nevertheless authorized in the basic SHO plan. Further, as already noted, such utilization of the base air forces appears to have been CinC, Combined Fleet's approved

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\* Commander Okinawa Base Force Dispatch 100940, October 1944 to Commander Sasebo Naval District (Combined Escort Force DesOpOrd 259) WDC Document 160369.

\*\* Ibid 101020.

\*\*\* Ibid 101215.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101214, October 1944 to Combined Fleet, WDC Document 160137.



policy under the conditions as then known.

That he apparently felt that the actions which had been taken regarding searches from Kanoya and Okinawa were sufficient, for the present, seems correct for, until midafternoon, he issued no directive beyond his original order to operate in accordance with previous orders.

Shortly after 1400, having received no additional information on the enemy situation, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force issued an operational outline to his command. Therein, repeating the directive received earlier from CinC, Combined Fleet, he ordered his command (a) to "clarify the over-all enemy situation and at favorable opportunity.... to engage and destroy the enemy task force," (b) should SHO Two be activated to operate in accordance with previously established policies and (c) should both SHO One and SHO Two, or SHO One only, be activated, first to destroy the enemy task force off Nansai Shoto, second to destroy the enemy task force off Formosa, and third to carry out decisive battle operations from the Philippines.\*

By this time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had become somewhat impatient with the failure of his command to locate the enemy. Knowing the combat radius of Allied carrier aircraft and the many hours they had been operating off Okinawa he could not understand why they had not been located. Therefore, at 1426 he issued more specific instructions.\*\* He directed all SIXTH Base Force units to employ every available means to ascertain the enemy situation. In addition, he directed (a) his forces on southern Kyushu to institute day and night searches using large and small type aircraft from both main bases and outlying bases including those in northern Nansai Shoto. These forces were also to augment the strength of the Okinawa forces for dusk searches, and (b) his forces on Formosa, which up to this time had taken no action other than to send out three aircraft on routine morning search from Shinchiku, to utilize outlying bases in Sakishima Gunto, midway between northern Formosa and Okinawa, for additional searches.

At about this same time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received word from his Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla on Okinawa wherein that commander advised him that at 1403 the Oroku sector of Okinawa was being continuously attacked by Allied carrier planes about 200 of which had already attacked and that the enemy task force had not yet

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 101406, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 30), WDC Document 160137.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 101426, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 31), Historical Section FEC Unnumbered Microfilm.



been located.\* This dispatch which was the first information he had received from this commander since early morning, and which was far from complete, must have left some questions in the mind of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force viz., (a) what were his forces on Okinawa doing to ascertain the enemy situation and, (b) considering the probable damage received, what could they do? It should be clear here that Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla had neglected to inform his commander of the effect, if any, the Allied air attack had had on his capability to carry out the orders he had received. The difficulty of conducting effective military operations without such information is so obvious as to require no explanation here.

At about 1503, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was informed by his commander at Kanoya that the first morning search from that base had returned at 1339 without locating the enemy.\*\* By this time the second morning search had also returned without having made contact and the afternoon search of four two-engine land bombers of 406th Attack Unit had been underway for two and a half hours.\*\*\* This latter search, of which Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had been informed by his Senior Staff Officer at Kanoya at about 1140,\*\*\*\* had actually taken off at 1230 to search the sector 167°-208°(T) to 600 miles. An additional search by two carrier-type reconnaissance planes of 141st Air Group at Kanoya had also been sent out at 1317 to cover the sector 177½°-197½°(T) to 500 miles.\*\*\* Data available does not indicate whether or not Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was informed of this latter search.

During the afternoon Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received no further information from Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla on Okinawa although an additional dispatch from Commander Base Force at Okinawa indicated that the attack was still in progress.\*\*\*\*\*

He could assume by now that his "T" Force was ready to attack. However, although he had directed maximum effort by his search commanders he had as yet received no information as to the location of the enemy task forces.

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 101403, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces.

\*\* Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 101433, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, etc., WDC Document 161437.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 101112, October 1944, addressees unknown, WDC Document 161437.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander Okinawa Base Force Dispatch 101515, October 1944 to Ships and Stations receiving Intelligence Reports, WDC Document 160369.



Sometime in the late afternoon but probably after 1720\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received the contacts for which he had been waiting since morning. The two carrier-type reconnaissance planes of 141st Air Group which had departed Kanoya at 1317 reported by dispatch having made two contacts as follows: Three enemy carriers bearing 195° distance 357 miles at 1533, and two large enemy carriers bearing 187° distance 400 miles from Toi Misaki (near Kanoya) at 1540. These contacts were broadcast by Commander Sasebo Naval District to his command at 2109°.\*\* Whether Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received these reports directly or whether they were given to the search unit of the "T" Force attack group is not indicated in the data available. The reported positions were of fair accuracy. Actually, the first contact was about twenty-eight miles north of the most northerly task group of TF 38; the second one was about the same distance to the east of the most easterly group. Considering the formidable opposition which the Japanese pilots had reason to expect when scouting for TF 38 and further considering that these two carrier-type reconnaissance planes were the only search planes during the day to make contact and survive, their observations were creditable.

At 1851, expecting these contacts to be followed by a night attack by the "T" Force, he alerted all of his commanders to the necessity for being prepared to take care of aircraft of the night attack unit should such aircraft be forced back to base.\*\*\*

At about 2000, the "T" Force commenced attack operations. The first phase consisted of sending out five search planes of the THIRTEENTH Reconnaissance Unit and the 708th Attack Unit to locate the enemy. Of these five planes, for reasons unknown, two turned back without searching. Up to 2400 the remaining three had failed to locate the enemy. During this search the "T" Force kept in readiness an attack group of about sixty aircraft.\*\*\*\*

At about 2015, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was informed that the three regular search planes from Shinchiku and, also, three special search planes which had been ordered flown by Formosa Air Group later

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\* Kikai Island Air Base Dispatch 101650, October 1944; Detailed Action Report No. 2 Northern Attack Force, SECOND Base Air Force, October 10th-November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645 NA 12262.

\*\* Commander Sasebo Naval District Dispatch 102109, October 1944 to Sasebo Naval District, WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 101851, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force and 14th Combined Group (unnumbered) Microfilm, Historical Division FEC.

\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



in the day to cover the sector 097°-129°(T) to 300\* miles had returned to base without sighting any enemy surface force. The Shinchiku search did report sighting a surfaced submarine at 1515 in position Latitude 20°-30'N, Longitude 123°-30'E on course 050°(T) speed sixteen knots. For reasons not stated, an attack could not be executed.\*\* This was the ASPRO which was returning to Saipan from patrol. The ASPRO reported that at 1515 she had in Latitude 20°-45'N, Longitude 123°-10'E contacted by radar an aircraft target closing. She had promptly submerged. On surfacing twenty minutes later she had observed that the aircraft had disappeared.\*\*\*

At about 2100, two of the four search planes of 406th Attack Unit had departed Kanoya at 1230 returned without making contact. The other two failed to return.\*\*\*\*

At about this time four radar equipped flying boats departed to search for the enemy task force.\*\*\*\* Information available does not indicate the base from which they had departed nor the unit to which they belonged although they probably belonged to the 901st Air Group. Up to 2400 they had made no contact.

Shortly after 2100 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received another contact report. This one reported surface craft, apparently hostile, bearing 065°, distance 140 miles from Garan Bi on the southern end of Formosa, and was made by other radar equipped flying boats.\*\*\*\*\* This position was about 405 miles to the west of the earlier 1540 contact and 340 miles southwest of Okinawa. What action he took is not known. Inasmuch as the position was 670 miles bearing 201°(T) from Kanoya, he did not pass this contact to his forces which were standing by to attack from that base. Apparently, although he must have realized the capability of the enemy to have a task force in that area, he decided to wait until his dawn searches from Shinchiku could confirm and develop this contact. As has been noted earlier, this was actually a false report; there were no Allied forces in the area in which the contact was reported.

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\* Commander 21st Air Flotilla SigOpOrd No. 31, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group. Searches and Patrols of F's (Shinchiku) Sectors, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\* War Patrol Report ASPRO, Report of FIFTH War Patrol, Serial 017, October 25th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

Thus, by the end of the day Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had been unable to attack the enemy. Despite the alerted condition of his forces before the Allied attack, and despite the many searches flown during the day, he had made but one contact on the task force which had attacked Okinawa and that contact had been neither maintained nor regained. Why this contact was not reported by one of the two planes until after they had returned to base is not known. Possibly, due to material failure neither plane was able to communicate with its base, but if such was the case would it not have been logical to return to the nearest base in the Nansei Shoto from which the contact could be relayed? This would have been Okinawa. Perhaps the fact that this base was still under attack deterred the pilots.

The failure to receive promptly this contact report prevented the dispatch of tracking aircraft which might have maintained the contact and have guided the attack of the "T" Force. As a result no attack was made.

During the day Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was aware that CinC, Combined Fleet had taken certain additional actions, looking to activation of either SHO One or SHO Two or both for the base air forces. In addition to incorporating the 501st Attack Unit in the "T" Force and directing Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force to stand by to move his forces to southern Kyushu as already noted, CinC, Combined Fleet had transferred the 901st Air Group from the Escort Force, the 953rd Air Group from the Takao Guard Force, and the Okinawa Air Group from the Sasebo Naval District, all to the SIXTH Base Air Force.\*

(2) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force,  
October 10th.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force at his headquarters at Manila, although he may not have been aware of the alert established in Sasebo Naval District in the early morning of October 10th, received information of the initial attack on Okinawa at about 0730.\*\* Thereafter he was generally informed of the developing situation by being made an information addressee on the more important dispatches.

At about 1005, he received the first order requiring his action. CinC, Combined Fleet, in addition to repeating the information of the initial attack on Okinawa, directed a patrol alert in the search sectors

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 100700, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, Commander FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, WDC Document 160137.



of the SIXTH Base Air Force and also in the sectors covered from Luzon.\*

At about 1245, he received the second order requiring his action, the Combined Fleet Order setting an alert for SHO One and Two, for the base air forces.\*\* What specific action he took is not shown in the data available to this study. Presumably, he continued to carry out the searches as designated for the SHO Operation. Beyond that he readied his command for action while carefully watching the movements of the enemy task force. He realized, of course, that should SHO One be activated later for action in the Philippine area, he would be expected to engage his entire force; should SHO Two be activated, he would be expected to provide a supporting role to the operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. What this would consist of would depend on the situation existing at the time. At about 1320, this was made clear when CinC, Combined Fleet advised that should SHO Two be activated for the Base Air Forces, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force would continue his operations in the Philippines and western Carolines and in addition, depending on the situation, would employ a part of his strength in the SHO Two Operations.\*\*\*

He does not appear to have been surprised by the attack on Okinawa. As early as October 4th he had considered it strongly possible that an enemy task force might attack in the Formosa and northern Philippines area and had accordingly established a strict alert in his command.\*\*\*\*

His command was even further alerted during the afternoon by a dispatch received at about 1600 from his superior, Commander SW Area Fleet.\*\*\*\*\* That commander estimated the general situation in the light of the Okinawa attack, and reiterated the necessity for a strict alert due to the possibility that the enemy task force might proceed to attacks on Formosa and the Philippines after Okinawa.

From Diagram "B" it is apparent that during October 10th the enemy task force was well beyond the range of the FIFTH Base Air Force and no direct action could be taken. The latter force could only continue its searches and await further developments.

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100935, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces, etc., (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 333), WDC Document 161437.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101214, October 1944 to Combined Fleet, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101241, October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Combined Fleet (Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd 6), WDC Document 160264.

\*\*\*\* Commander FIFTH Base Air Force Dispatch 042300, October 1944 to FIFTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160264.

\*\*\*\*\* CofS, SW Area Fleet Dispatch 101554, October 1944 to All Fleet and Force Commanders, SW Area, etc., WDC Document 161638.



## (d) Operations of CG, FOURTH Air Army, October 10th.

The CG, FOURTH Air Army was presumably informed of the attack on Okinawa at about 0730, although the Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla on Okinawa had not included army commands in his dispatch advising of the attack, it is logical to assume that Commander FIFTH Base Air Force passed this information to the Army air commander, since the FOURTH Air Army and the FIFTH Base Air Force, both with headquarters in Manila, were cooperating in search operations. It is also logical to assume that this information was received from Imperial General Headquarters as well. As with the FIFTH Base Air Force, what action CG, FOURTH Air Army may have taken is not known.

It should be clear, however, that in accordance with the agreement for joint action against enemy task forces by Army and Navy air forces in the Philippines prior to the activation of the SHO Operations, the CG, FOURTH Air Army was already carrying out short-range searches. Beyond these search operations he could do little except to prepare his forces for more direct action should the enemy task force come within range. In the meantime, in cooperation with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, he was forced to watch the actions to the north and await developments.

## (2) Operations on October 11th.

## (a) Operations of CinC, Combined Fleet

CinC, Combined Fleet, at his headquarters at Shinchiku Air Base Formosa awaited further contacts from his night search planes and further reports from his force commanders.

At about midnight he received a very important report from the Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla transmitted at 2302 the previous day (October 10th). This report, which was quite comprehensive, stated (a) that from 0650 until 1615 a total of about 280 planes had struck the Naha area in four waves attacking mainly airfields, harbors and shipping, (b) that the two reconnaissance planes launched at 0830 (to discover the enemy) had been shot down and had obtained no enemy information (c) that his forces had observed five enemy planes destroyed by AA fire and one by air combat (d) that his plane losses were twenty planes destroyed, two damaged (e) that there had been fifty bomber hits on his airfield runways, but that the runways would be operational that morning (October 11th), (f) that practically all buildings on the Naha airfields had been destroyed and (g) finally that his personnel losses had been slight.\*

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 102302, October 1944 to All Concerned, WDC Document 160137.



This report was discouraging. Heavy enemy air forces had struck Okinawa; had retired with limited losses, and had inflicted considerable, but not vital damage, with little loss to themselves. He noted that the airfields would be speedily repaired. This compared favorably with Allied experience which had shown that bombing airfields, while often temporarily effective, is ineffective for other than short periods unless the bombing or shelling of the airfields is maintained continuously. He also noted that the 280 planes were only for the Naha area; it would be interesting to learn what had occurred in the north Okinawa airfields.

At about 0145, he most likely received a dispatch from Commander "T" Force wherein he advised his command that on that day they were going to reconnoiter the over-all enemy situation and would endeavor to destroy the Allied task forces present by dusk and night action.\*

At about 0230, he received a second dispatch from Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla which answered his mental queries with respect to the north Okinawa airfields. This dispatch stated (a) that from 0645 until 1600 October 10th a total of about eighty carrier planes had attacked Okinawa North Air Base (b) that of the four scheduled search planes which had departed at 0610, three had been shot down with no contacts and one had returned because of engine trouble (c) that ten planes (total available aircraft) had been destroyed on the ground with very light personnel losses and (d) that he believed that all Army fighter planes present (number unknown) had been destroyed both in the air or on the ground.\*\*

CinC, Combined Fleet could now see that about 360 sorties had struck Okinawa. Since some of these sorties were obviously repeats, he could also see that this report from Okinawa tended to confirm Commander SW Area's estimate made at 1554 the preceding day. There were at least two, and probably more, carrier groups.

At about 0330, he received word that at about 0300 his search planes had detected a surface force on a southerly course bearing south south-east distant 380 miles from Naha.\*\*\* This contact report was reasonably correct but it was incomplete in that it merely reported a contact rather than the group nature of the contact. Whether this was due to the fact that Japanese aircraft radar was too poor at this time for such definition, or whether the pilots were reluctant to close the contact sufficiently to permit definition, is not known.

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\* Commander Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 110115, October 1944 to "T" Force ("T" Force Urgent Patrol Report No. 8) WDC Document 161437.

\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 110136, October 1944 to All Concerned, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-104.



CinC, Combined Fleet took no action as the areas embraced by the SHO One and SHO Two alert had already been alerted to the possibility of Allied air attack.

At about 1000, he was advised by Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla that all airfields in the Nansai Shoto area were operational as of 0800.\*

At about 1130, he most likely received a dispatch which reported that at 1105, a contact had been made on an Allied carrier task group consisting of three carriers and three battleships bearing 062°(T) distant 515 miles from Manila and which alerted the SW Area Force to the strong possibility of an attack on the Philippines at dawn the following morning.(October 12th).\*\* This contact, while reasonably accurate as to range was approximately ten degrees to the right in error. The correct bearing should have been about 052°(T).

It is important to observe here that Commander SW Area Force's estimate of the possibility of an Allied carrier strike against the Philippines forecast the attack for the following morning rather than for that day. Actually, the Allied strike, as will be shown later, struck Aparri, northern Luzon at about 1415. This error in judgment appears to have stemmed from the fact that TF 38 carrier strikes had almost invariably struck at dawn and therefore Commander SW Area Force had overlooked the enemy's capability of making an afternoon attack on northern Luzon. This shows the value of the surprise factor in war and also shows the value of not permitting the attack plans to become so stereotyped as to give the enemy an unnecessary advantage.

CinC, Combined Fleet received no further reports until about 1330 when he received an intelligence dispatch from Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo wherein that command advised the fleet as to the probable character of the Allied carrier task force based on the September attacks of TF 38 on Palau and the Philippines. GHQ believed (a) that this force was TF 38, composed of eight large carriers (CV), eight cruiser-carriers (CVL), eight-ten battleships, fourteen to eighteen cruisers and sixty destroyers, (b) that TF 38 was organized into four groups each with a nucleus of two CV and two CVL with CTF 38, Vice Admiral Mitscher, in the LEXINGTON with third group, (c) that TF 38 constituted the entire Allied carrier strength operating in the western Pacific against the Japanese islands and that it was ready for decisive

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 110927, October 1944, WDC Document 160137.

\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 111258, October 1944 to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160264, NA 12592; also Detailed Action Report No. 6, Attack Unit 708, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579, NA 12297.



battle at any time, (d) that the designation given this Allied carrier task force was TF 38 when it was operating with the THIRD Fleet and TF 58 when it was operating with the FIFTH Fleet and (e) that replacement planes and aircraft were provided by two or three carrier escorts (CVE) which were disposed behind the above forces, and which carried about seventy flying crews ready for operations, including crews for the various types of aircraft within TF 38.\*

This is an extremely interesting dispatch and shows very clearly how accurate the Japanese information concerning TF 38 was. For the information contained in this dispatch was almost entirely correct. There were eight large carriers (CV), nine instead of eight cruiser-carriers (CVL), six instead of eight to ten battleships (BB), fourteen cruisers (CA and CL) and fifty-nine instead of sixty destroyers (DD). This information was probably largely obtained from the interrogation of prisoners, as had been done several years previously, at the Battle of Midway,\*\* by an earlier CinC, Combined Fleet, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto. The fact that the information was so accurate points out the lesson that a commander who has been operating against the enemy for some time with carrier task forces of more or less stable composition should credit his enemy with a fairly accurate knowledge of the composition of those forces.

Also at about 1330 he presumably received a dispatch reporting an Allied carrier task group of three carriers and three battleships with an unspecified number of cruisers in approximately the same area as the 1105 contact report.\*\*\* This contact was reasonably correct.

At about 1420 he received a dispatch from Shinchiku of another task group, of undetermined origin, operating about sixty miles to the northwest of the 1105 group.\*\*\*\* This was also a reasonably correct report.

At about 1500 he received information that "several tens" of enemy aircraft, shortly after 1400, had raided the northern sector of Luzon, with particular emphasis on the Engano and Aparri areas, but had

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\* Third Section, Imperial General Headquarters Navy Section Dispatch 111255, October 1944 to All Fleet Commanders, WDC Document 161005.

\*\* Mobile Force Detailed Action Report No. 6, ONI Review, May 1947, page 26 (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 155).

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, Attack Unit 708, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579 NA 12297.

\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-104.



inflicted practically no damage.\* He knew then that his Commander SW Area Force had been caught by surprise by this attack.

At about 1700 he received a message from Commander "T" Force stating that the Kanoya searches, returning at 1500, had failed to sight the enemy; that the weather had been generally clear with rain in certain areas at the outward perimeter of the search; and that the visibility had varied from 10-20 miles.\*\* Naturally, these searches had failed because TF 38 had moved out of the search areas.

He received no contact reports from his Okinawa search planes because but one search plane was available and this plane searched an area other than the one in which TF 38 was operating.

During the early evening the CofS, Combined Fleet appears to have re-estimated the situation and arrived at the conclusion that (a) since his air searches from Kyushu and Okinawa had been negative which showed that TF 38 was most probably not in the searched area, and (b) since his contacts on carrier task groups to the northeast of Manila and the air attacks on Aparri showed that the enemy was in all probability in the Philippines-Formosa area, it was not necessary to maintain his SECOND Striking Force and CARDIV FOUR (less air units) in an alert condition. He therefore at 2117, cancelled the sortie alert for these forces.\*\*\* This decision seems sound, for it is unwise to retain naval commands in an alert condition any longer than is absolutely necessary since it adversely affects the morale of the personnel.

Also, possibly about this same time, the exact time not being available to this study, he directed Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (Submarine Force) to dispatch the FIRST Submarine Force to the waters east of Formosa to deliver a full-scale attack against the enemy there.\*\*\*\*

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\* Material for Situation Estimates, First Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm). Also Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File.

\*\* Commander Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 111625, October 1944 to All Concerned, WDC Document 161437.

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 112117, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, Commander SECOND Striking Force, etc., (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 338), WDC Document 161715.

\*\*\*\* Submarine Operations in Philippine Waters 1944-1945, Department of Army Historical Division, File 8-5, JS-15.



While this employment was not in accordance with the SHO plan, which matter will be discussed under Japanese submarines, it is considered sound in this case since, if the Base Air Forces were successful, many targets might become available to submarines as occurred at the Battle of Midway, June 6th, 1942, when the I-168 torpedoed the damaged YORXTOWN.

During the afternoon and evening, CinC, Combined Fleet followed the movements of his air forces. He knew that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was planning to carry out searches with radar equipped planes in order to trail TF 38 and had issued orders for October 12th.\* He knew that the "T" Force was being ordered to attack on October 12th staging through Okinawa.\*\* He also knew that the SIXTH Base Air Force was redeploying to Formosa, employing the light cruiser KASHIMA.\*\*\* Finally he knew that orders had been issued to disperse and conceal aircraft not being employed for interception.\*

As he took no action with regard to the above plans it is assumed that he considered them satisfactory.

(b) Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 11th.

During the 11th Commander Mobile Force took no important action, but awaited the outcome of the air operations of that day, and, also awaited orders from CinC, Combined Fleet.

At about 2140 he received a dispatch from CinC, Combined Fleet cancelling the sortie alert for the SECOND Striking Force and CARDIV FOUR.\*\*\*\*

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 11th.

The FIRST Striking Force remained in the Lingga-Singapore area and continued its training as discussed under October 10th.

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 111830 to SIXTH Base Air Force, October 1944, contained in GHQ, FEC Letter January 10th, 1952 to President, Naval War College.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Imperial General Headquarters Dispatch 111903, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, Commandant Kure Naval District.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 112117, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, Commander SECOND Striking Force, etc., (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 338), WDC Document 161715.

Commander FIRST Striking Force maintained a close watch on the developing situation since, should a SHO alert be called, he expected, under certain circumstances, to send his tankers in advance towards Brunei or towards the north central Philippines. The tankers were to proceed by a direct route in order to expedite their arrival at the designated base. This was in contradistinction to the probable movement of his combat forces which were not limited to any predetermined route.\*

(2) Operations of the Commander Main Force, October 11th.

During the day Commander Main Force took no important action but awaited the outcome of the days operations. The units of the Main Force remained at the same anchorages they had occupied on October 10th, and continued their preparations for the transfer of the air groups to southern Kyushu.

CARDIV FOUR fueled during this day in anticipation of sorting with the SECOND Striking Force.

At about 1920 he received word that the destroyer KASHI was to proceed to Tokushima to assist in the transfer of CARDIV FOUR Air Group (634th Air Group).\*\*

At 2140 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch cancelling the sortie alert for the SECOND Striking Force and CARDIV FOUR.\*\*\* Since he had received most of the dispatches concerning the day's activities and had maintained thereafter a running estimate of the situation it seems probable that the sortie order cancellation was not unexpected.

(3) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 11th.

On October 11th this force plus CARDIV FOUR less DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE was fueling at Kure. All ships were in No. 3 Anti-Aircraft Alert.

Commander SECOND Striking Force was observing closely the days's developments not only in the strategical situation, but in the material readiness of his ships. He, of course, realized that at any moment he

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\* Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, Part VI, Outline of Operations, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* COMDESRON 11 Dispatch 11848, October 1944 to DESRON 11, War Diary DESRON 11, October 1944 (DESRON 11 SigOrd 108), WDC Document 161715.

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 112117, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, Commander SECOND Striking Force, etc., (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 338), WDC Document 161715.



might be ordered to sortie, and it became highly important not only that his ships be fully ready, but also that he be prepared with possible plans for the employment of his ships under the most probable situations which might obtain.

He received most of the more important dispatches concerning the air operations of the Japanese as well as those of the enemy, and sometime after 1130 received word of the contact on an Allied carrier task group bearing 062°(T) distant 515 miles from Manila.\* He also, sometime after 1330, received an Imperial General Headquarters' dispatch which advised the fleet as to the probable character of the enemy task force.\*\* What his reactions to this dispatch were, are not known, but it seems clear that he realized that the chances of a sortie were very small indeed (a) because his limited forces would have little success against the Allied armada should but one task group of that armada be in the Nansei Shoto area and (b) because the indications were that the Allied task force was most probably in the vicinity of Luzon.

If this was his idea it was verified in part by a dispatch received about 1500 which reported that northern Luzon had been hit by an air strike at about 1400.\*\*\* Therefore, hearing of no Allied attacks other than this air strike, Commander SECOND Striking Force, at 1630, cancelled his No. 3 Anti-Aircraft Alert.\*\*\*\*

At about 1700 he received word that the Kanoya searches had all been negative.\*\*\*\*\*

Sometime after 2140 he received a dispatch from CinC, Combined Fleet cancelling the sortie alert for the SECOND Striking Force and CARDIV FOUR.\*\*\*\*\* Since he took no immediate action on this dispatch but instead maintained the sortie alert within his command, it would

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 6 Attack Unit 708, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579 NA 12297.

\*\* Third Section, Imperial General Headquarters Navy Section Dispatch 111255, October 1944 to All Fleet Commanders, WDC Document 161005.

\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, First Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm). Also Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II October-December, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 111630, October 1944 to SECOND Striking Force, WDC Document 161715.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 111625, October 1944 to All Concerned, WDC Document 161437.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 112117, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, Commander SECOND Striking Force, etc., (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 338)., WDC Document 161715.

seem that this dispatch had (a) been delayed in transmission until early the next morning when, as will be shown later, Commander SECOND Striking Force did take action or (b) had been received on schedule but had not been acted on for reasons not available to this study.

(c) Operations of Base Air Forces, October 11th.

(1) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force

At 0000 October 11th Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was awaiting the results of the two night searches then underway: (a) that by three search aircraft of the "T" Force operating from Kyushu which were attempting to locate the enemy task force preliminary to an attack by the "T" Force attack group which was being held in readiness, and (b) that by four flying boats operating apparently from Formosa which had commenced a radar search during the evening of October 10th.

Shortly after midnight Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received his first comprehensive report from his commander on Okinawa,\* wherein that commander reported (a) that the Naha area of Okinawa had been attacked by about 280 planes in four waves which had attacked mainly airfields, harbors, and shipping, (b) that the following damage had been inflicted:

- (1) Practically all buildings on the airfield destroyed.
- (2) Fifty bomb hits on the runways which would be operational by morning, October 11th.
- (3) Own aircraft destroyed in the air: Two
- (4) Own aircraft destroyed on the ground: Nineteen
- (5) Own aircraft moderately damaged on the ground:  
Two

(c) that five enemy aircraft had been destroyed by ground fire, and one by air combat; that one man had been killed, and three seriously wounded, and that two carrier type reconnaissance planes, which had been sent out at 0830 to locate the enemy task force, had failed to return.

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 102301, October 1944 to Stations Authorized to receive SIXTH Base Air Force Battle Reports, WDC Document 160137.



At about 0200 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received another report from his Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla.\* This report stated that eighty additional enemy carrier planes had attacked Okinawa North Air Base causing ten two-engine land bombers to be set afire on the ground, two oil trucks destroyed and two men killed. It also stated that of the four two-engine land bombers which had departed on routine search on the morning of the 10th, one had returned with engine trouble and had been damaged on the ground, while the other three had failed to return. Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla also added that he believed that all Army fighter planes present on Okinawa had been destroyed.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force now knew why it was that his forces on Okinawa had been unable to provide him with confirmation concerning the attacking Allied carrier force. All of his planes at that base had been either damaged or destroyed and all of his planes, which had been sent on search, had failed to return.

The "T" Force search made no contacts but the flying boat search did. At about 0300, one of these flying boats reported a radar contact on the enemy task force. This contact, which was on a course of south,\*\* was bearing south southeast of Okinawa distant 380 miles, and bearing 185°(T) distant 660 miles from Kanoya. The Commander "T" Force decided that the distance of the contact from Kanoya was too great and, that since the task force was proceeding south, no attack was possible.\*\*\* Actually this contact was in error for the Allied carrier task force at this time was bearing 192°(T) distance 600 miles from Kanoya. Since the base of the search plane is not known it cannot be determined whether the error was in bearing or in range or in both. It seems probable that the base was somewhere in Formosa and therefore the error was most likely a range error. The reported contact was 100 miles bearing 125°(T) from the nearest group of TF 38. Possibly the pilot of the aircraft had grossly underestimated headwinds on his outbound leg.

At 0430 the "T" Force in accordance with orders received at 0115\*\*\*\* launched a five plane search from Kanoya to locate the enemy task force. This search, made by land attack planes of 708th Attack Unit,

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 110136, October 1944 to Stations Authorized to receive SIXTH Base Air Force Battle Reports, WDC Document 160137.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, SECOND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 110115, October 1944 to "T" Force, WDC Document 161437.



was directed to search the sector  $107\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ - $157\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ (T) to 650 miles.\*

At 0500 Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla sent out one carrier type reconnaissance plane, presumably the only plane of those damaged on October 10th which could be repaired by morning, to search the sector  $182^{\circ}$ - $206^{\circ}$ (T) from Okinawa to a distance of 300 miles.\*\*

At 0515 three additional search planes were launched from Kanoya. Three land reconnaissance planes were sent out to search the sector  $149\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ - $209\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ (T) to 300 miles.\*\*\*

At 0630 eight land attack planes (all operational aircraft) of the 708th Attack Unit detachment based at Shinchiku departed on search of sector  $082^{\circ}$ - $163^{\circ}$ (T) to a distance of 600 miles. At the same time two land reconnaissance planes of the 804th Fighter Unit departed Shinchiku to search the sector  $062^{\circ}$ - $083^{\circ}$ (T) to 300 miles.\*\*\*\*

At about this same time six carrier type attack planes of the FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group commenced a search\*\*\*\*\* from Taito, Formosa to a distance of 250 miles between bearings  $105^{\circ}$ - $150^{\circ}$ (T).

At 0722 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force directed his forces in southern Kyushu to reinforce the depleted air strength on Okinawa by sending, provided the enemy situation permitted, about ten two-engine land bombers to Okinawa.\*\*\*\*\* Actually seven two-engine land bombers were sent.\*\*\* Why Commander SIXTH Base Air Force waited about five hours to issue this order is not clear, for he knew by 0200 that, although Okinawa's aircraft had all been damaged or destroyed, the runways would be in commission again by morning. Possibly he expected his senior staff officer at Kanoya to act in this matter and only issued the order when no action was forthcoming.

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\* Detailed Patrol and Action Report No. 5, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group: Patrols of "Q" Sector, October 4th-11th, 1944, WDC Document 161437.

\*\* War Diary 25th Air Flotilla, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* Commander 21st Air Flotilla SigOpOrd 33, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\*\* Merit Report, 14th Combined Air Group Taiwan Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 110722, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 33), FEC Historical Division Microfilm (unnumbered)



During the morning Commander SIXTH Base Air Force again awaited information on the location of the enemy. He was still carrying out the first part of his orders received on the previous day from CinC, Combined Fleet, namely to scout the enemy situation and at a favorable opportunity to attack and destroy him. What contacts had been made thus far had failed to provide him with the favorable opportunity.

In the meantime, in addition to watching the situation, his staff at Kanoya was concerned with plans for the deployment of SEVENTH Base Air Force units, and of the air groups of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR at Kyushu bases should such be ordered by CinC, Combined Fleet.\*

At about 1135 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received the first contact from his day searches. One of the land attack planes of the 708th Attack Unit based at Shinchiku reported sighting at 1105 an enemy task group with three carriers bearing 115°(T) distance 480 miles from Garan Bi.\*\* While this force was beyond the effective range of his land-based aircraft, the position indicated to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that the enemy had completed its attacks, at least for the time being, on Okinawa and that either northern Luzon or Formosa would be the next target. At 1141 he directed the "T" Force to prepare immediately to move to the Formosa area, or to Okinawa, depending on the situation.\*\*\*

At about this same time the 501st Attack Unit with thirty-one two-engine land bombers arrived in southern Kyushu and reported to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force for duty in the "T" Force.\*\*\*\* This was in accordance with CinC, Combined Fleet's orders issued on the preceding day.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, SECOND Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 111141, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, etc. (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 34) WDC Document 160258.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Reports, 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944-January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 100902, October 1944 to Combined Fleet (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 330) contained in Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22 Item B.



At about 1330 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received the dispatch intelligence estimate of Navy Section, Imperial General Headquarters.\* As noted previously, this dispatch estimated, based on previous information of the Allied carrier force, that the enemy task force was probably composed of eight large carriers (CV), and eight cruiser-carriers (CVL), as well as eight-ten battleships, fourteen-eighteen cruisers, and about sixty destroyers and that this force was divided into four groups.

Also at about 1330 he presumably received a dispatch reporting an Allied carrier task group of three carriers and three battleships with an unspecified number of cruisers in approximately the same area as the 1105 contact report. This contact, by a Shinchiku search plane, was reasonably correct.\*\*

How closely he agreed with the estimate is not indicated in the information available to this study. Presumably knowing the wide sources available to General Headquarters, he accepted the estimate.

From this information, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force could now estimate that he was opposed by approximately one thousand carrier-based planes. This was about twice as many as he had operational in the SIXTH Base Air Force. However, he knew that should SHO One and SHO Two be activated for the base air forces, he could then count on reinforcements from the SEVENTH Base Air Force and possibly also from CARDIV's THREE and FOUR, as this was provided by the SHO plan. In addition he knew that Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and CG, FOURTH Air Army in the Philippines would cooperate in the attack. This should give the superiority in numbers to the Japanese. Moreover, from a study of relative positions, he could see that should the enemy task force attack Formosa, which appeared likely at this time, it would be in range of Japanese land-based aircraft from three directions: Nansei Shoto to the north, Formosa to the west, and Luzon to the south. This would indeed provide the favorable opportunity for destroying the enemy for which he was seeking.

At about 1420 a second contact was reported by Shinchiku-based planes. This one was at 1350 on a second task group of undetermined strength sixty miles to the northwest of the first group.\*\*\*

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\* Third Section, Imperial General Headquarters, Navy Section Dispatch 111255, October 1944 to All Fleet Commanders, WDC Document 161005.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, Attack Unit 708, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579 NA 12297.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



These two contacts, one at 1105 and the second at 1350, were approximately correct in bearing from Shinchiku but, like the earlier 0300 contact, were over in range. The 1105 contact was about ninety miles from the nearest TF 38 task group; the other contact was about fifty miles. Why the Japanese pilots at this time consistently over-estimated their ground speeds and hence their distances from their bases is not known. These errors did not have a vital effect upon the developing air battle because no attack was launched because of them, but they are stressed here to indicate the need for accurate navigation in order that contact reports may be correct.

Shortly thereafter, at about 1500, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received information that Aparri and Engano in northern Luzon had been attacked at about 1400 by "several tens" of carrier aircraft, but that little damage had been inflicted.\* It is not improbable that this attack surprised and confused him somewhat for previous attacks by the Allied carrier task force had almost invariably commenced at dawn. He could not be certain now whether this attack indicated continuing enemy action against the Philippines on the next day, or whether this was but a passing sweep by the Allied carrier task force en route Formosa. Actually, this attack had little or no effect on his plans for he was still seeking a favorable opportunity to attack and could only continue his searches until the enemy had come within effective range of his bases.

At about 1700 he received dispatch information from Kanoya stating that four land attack planes of the morning search had returned at 1500 without sighting the enemy. The fifth plane was missing. Search visibility was but ten to twenty miles.\*\* Presumably, at about this same time, he was informed that eight two-engine land bombers of the 405th Attack Unit deploying from southern Kyushu to Formosa had conducted search en route but had made no contacts.\*\*\*

Shortly thereafter he received the report of Shinchiku searches, for the last plane had returned to that base at 1649. These search planes had made no contacts other than the three already noted. Two aircraft had failed to return.\*\*\*\*

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- \* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\* Kanoya Air Base Dispatch 111625, October 1944 to All Concerned, WDC Document 161437.
  - \*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group, Searches and Patrols of F's (Shinchiku) Sector, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.



The searches from Taito and Okinawa had reported no contacts.

At 1830 he issued his orders for operations on October 12th. He planned (a) to continue his searches from Kanoya, Okinawa, Shinchiku, and Taito, (b) to move the "T" Force to Okinawa after dawn and to conduct dusk and night attacks with that force against the Allied carrier task force east of Formosa, and (c) to prepare the remaining units of the SIXTH Base Air Force on Kyushu for a rapid advance to Formosa.\*

At about 1930 he learned that Imperial General Headquarters, Navy Section, was making the light cruiser KASHIMA, then assigned to the Kure Naval District, available for the transportation of material and base personnel of the SIXTH Base Air Force from Kyushu to Formosa.\*\*

During the night radar searches were conducted by patrol seaplanes of the 901st Air Group.\*\*\* Three planes of this group, which had departed Toko, Formosa, at 1900, had made contact at 2245 on three separate enemy task groups\*\*\*\* southeast of Formosa, the exact position being Latitude 21°-10'N, Longitude 124°-10'E.\*\*\*\*\* This contact was approximately correct in bearing and about twenty miles short in range, but was well within the capabilities of the radars of the Japanese seaplanes which could detect a large ship at an estimated range of forty-five miles.\*\*\*\*\*

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force took no action on these contacts prior to midnight. However, in estimating the situation at that time, it appeared probable that the Allied carrier task force was moving to a dawn position for attacks on Formosa on the following morning. He now had to decide what to do with the "T" Force which he had ordered to Okinawa after dawn. Should he allow these orders to stand or should he move this force up immediately so that it would be available to take advantage of any favorable attack opportunity which might arise?

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 111830, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.

\*\* Imperial General Headquarters Navy Section Dispatch 111903, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet and Commandant Kure Naval District, ATIS/FEC Historical Section Document 62239.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 120235, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force contained in GHQ, FEC Letter, January 10th 1952 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\*\*\* COM ONE Technical Intelligence Bulletin No. 2 Japanese Radar Equipment, May 1945.



(2) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force,  
October 11th.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force at Manila continued his search operations from the Philippines concurrent with readying his command for combat operations. Detailed information on what searches he conducted is not available but, it is assumed that his operations were generally in accordance with the FOURTH Air Army - FIFTH Base Air Force agreement concerning operations against enemy task forces prior to the activation of the SHO Operations.\* This included long-range searches as indicated on Diagram "C" and certain of the short-range searches as noted under the chapter "Land-Based Aircraft."

Whether or not Commander FIFTH Base Air Force received the 0300 contact made by a radar search seaplane is not known. Presumably he did, and, if so, the fact that this force was at that time still on a southerly course would have indicated to him (a) that its attack on Okinawa had been completed, and (b) that it now was approaching a position from which it might strike either the Philippines or Formosa. He could see, from its present position, that a dawn attack on Luzon that day was not possible, but he also could see that a strike later in the day, or at dawn on the following day (twelfth) was possible. What action he took, if any, is not known.

At about 1300 he received Commander SW Area Fleet's dispatch repeating the 1105 contact made by Shinchiku-based aircraft of the SIXTH Base Air Force, and alerting the Philippines forces to the strong possibility of an enemy attack on the Philippines after dawn, October 12th.\*\* Why he did not also receive a contact report from his own long-range searches is nowhere explained. However, since TF 38 was operating within the area covered by such searches from Manila, it is probable that some of the searches planned for this day were not actually made.

At about 1330 he received the intelligence estimate of Navy Section Imperial General Staff.

Shortly after 1400 he was informed of the enemy attack on northern Luzon, wherein it was reported that practically no damage had been incurred.\*

The actual report of Japanese losses is not available but it might be recalled that in the attack, made by fifty-five VF and six VF(P) of TF 38, Allied claims included fifteen Japanese aircraft destroyed on the ground and no airborne interception of the attack group. Japanese

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December, 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Commander SW Area Fleet's Dispatch 111258, October 1944 to FIFTH Base Air Force, etc., WDC Document 160264.



information on their losses in this attack are lacking due presumably to the destruction of the records incident to the capture of the Philippines. It would appear, however, that the air units at Aparri were operating under the basic concept of CinC, Combined Fleet wherein they were to avoid losses by generally refusing combat in the preliminary stages of the operation. Therefore the failure of the Commanding Officer at Aparri to disperse aircraft was probably due to surprise brought on through adherence to Commander SW Area Fleet's erroneous estimate of the preceding day.

Why he did not disperse his planes is not understood. It should have been apparent to him that planes retained on the field offered a simple target to attacking planes. It should also have been apparent that the Allied carrier task force had the capability of striking northern Luzon at almost any time in the afternoon. Since Aparri was the most northerly Japanese air base on Luzon does it not seem correct to say that its Commanding Officer should have realized that its danger to attack was ever present, and that his Commander SW Area Fleet's estimate referred more to the Manila area than to a distant outlying station such as Aparri?

Sometime thereafter Commander FIFTH Base Air Force probably received information of the 1350 contact made by a Shinchiku plane on a second Allied carrier task group sixty miles to the northeast of the first group sighted at 1105. In the light of Navy Section, Imperial General Staff's estimate of four groups this could have been no surprise.

Whether or not he expected additional attacks on northern Luzon during the remainder of October 11th is not known, but when they did not materialize and night search planes reported the enemy southeast of Formosa he may have decided that the attack on Aparri had been some sort of diversion. He presumably continued (a) to ready his command to assist SIXTH Base Air Force should SHO Two be ordered, (b) to assume primary responsibility for base air force operations should SHO One be activated, and (c) to cooperate equally with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force should both SHO One and SHO Two be activated.

(d) Operation of CG, FOURTH Air Army, October 11th.

CG, FOURTH Air Army continued to operate under his joint agreement made with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force for operations prior to the activation of the SHO Operation. This agreement required him to make certain short-range searches as noted under "Land-Based Aircraft."

It can be assumed that he was informed of the contacts made during the day. It can also be assumed that these contacts were also reported as well to CinC, Southern Army and to the two senior naval commands, Southwest Area Force and FIFTH Base Air Force, all of which were in Manila. There is no record of what action, if any, he may have taken as a result of the developing situation to the north. Undoubtedly he continued to prepare his command for combat and awaited the progress of operations as information became available.



(3) Operations on October 12th.

(a) Operations of CinC, Combined Fleet.

CinC, Combined Fleet remained at his headquarters at Shinchiku Air Base, Formosa and awaited developments. At this time he knew that his command was most probably being attacked by TF 38 which consisted of four task groups. To date he had located but two of these groups. These two groups were in the northeast quadrant distant about 500 miles from Manila and were about sixty miles apart on a NW-SE line of bearing. Where were the other two?

He also knew that a long range ineffective air strike had been made at about 1400 on Aparri, Luzon by a limited number of planes. He did not know whether these planes had come from the known carrier groups or from those not as yet located.

Since the initiative lay with the enemy as it was difficult to track him, he was faced with the problem of determining the enemy's plans.

Shortly after midnight he learned from Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that three radar equipped flying boats had, at 2245 October 11th, made contact on three separate Allied carrier task groups in the waters southeast of Formosa.\*

He now knew where three of the Allied search groups were. But, where was the fourth?

At about 0330 he received word from Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that an enemy force had been located at 0240 in Latitude  $20^{\circ}-10'N$ , Longitude  $123^{\circ}-10'W$  on bearing  $130^{\circ}(T)$  distant 175 miles from Garan Bi, Formosa.\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet presumably assumed that he had now located all four Allied task groups,\*\*\* although it was possible that this was one of the three originally contacted.

As a consequence of these contacts a general air raid alert was ordered on Formosa at 0334 by Commander Takao Naval Guard District, as

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 120235, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force contained in GHQ FEC Letter January 10th 1952 to President Naval War College.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 120326 October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force contained in GHQ FEC Letter January 10th 1952 to President, Naval War College.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944  
Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government October 1947  
Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5 JS-104.

it was estimated that Formosa was to be the target of that day's enemy air attacks.\*

This estimate was correct for at 0648 Allied carrier planes commenced striking that island.\*\* Since CinC, Combined Fleet was on Formosa it is clear that he was fully familiar with the nature and power of the Allied air attack. It is also clear that during this time he was either in company with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force or in direct telephone communication with him (Takao to Shinchiku). He knew, of course, that the Allied planes were attacking his principal bases and were causing considerable destruction especially in Takao Harbor and at Mako.

During this time he presumably received reports as follows:

- 0630 - That fifty enemy aircraft were overhead proceeding west;\*\*\*
- 0708 - That fifty fighters were east of Toko heading north;\*\*\*\*
- 0709 - That sixty aircraft were observed SW of Taito heading NW;\*\*\*\*\*
- 0727 - That the Formosa air group was engaging the enemy\*\*\*\*\* and that at
- 0735 - Thirty enemy fighters and bombers were heading towards Takao.\*\*\*\*\*

Meanwhile he himself had been under attack for between 0730 and 0830 about fifty enemy fighters and bombers had attacked Shinchiku.\*\*\*\*\*

He also knew at this time that about thirty-eight carrier type fighters (Zeros) from Shinchiku had engaged about 100 Allied fighters (F6F's). He probably believed, from the reports, that the Shinchiku planes had succeeded in destroying about twenty-two Allied fighters with six more probably destroyed, and had shot down two SBC (presumably meant SB2C) by AA gunfire. He knew that the Shinchiku forces had lost eighteen

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 1, Kobi Air Group, October 12th, 1944, WDC Document 160495.
  - \*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government October 1947 Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5 JS-104.
  - \*\*\* Tainan Air Group Dispatch 120630, October 1944 to Kobi Air Group, WDC Document 160495.
  - \*\*\*\* Takao Naval Guard District Dispatch 120708 to All Units, WDC Document 160495.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Ibid, Dispatch 120709.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Commander FOURTEENTH Air Group Dispatch 120727, October 1944 to all Units, WDC Document 160495.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Ibid, Dispatch 120735.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Western Attack Force No. 3 Urgent Battle Report (October 12th) Forwarded by Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 130200 October 1944, WDC Document 160579.



fighters which had failed to return, of which five had reportedly crashed into Allied planes, four had been heavily damaged in forced landings and one was hit by shellfire. He knew that two hangars had been set on fire, one had been demolished and one bachelor officers quarters had been destroyed. The runways had escaped damage.\* This claim of damage done to Allied fighters by the Shinchiku planes was far from correct and was, in fact, highly exaggerated for the Allies lost but twenty-two fighters in all Formosa. However, it is a fact that the Allies lost, on this day (October 12th), forty-eight planes of all types.

It is not clear at this writing whether the results of the Allied attack at Shinchiku had any effect on the future decisions of CinC, Combined Fleet. However, it may have suggested to him that perhaps his land-based aircraft was as effective as the Allied carrier-based aircraft for the claimed plane losses favored the Japanese (28 vs 23), and the Japanese interceptor fighters had been but two-fifths those of the Allies (38 vs 100).

At about 0830 he received a contact report from a Shinchiku search plane reporting two large ships, probably carriers,\*\* and at 0915 he received another report from a Taito search plane reporting a large enemy force including carriers, bearing 086°(T) distant sixty miles from Taito.\*\*\*

At 1015 the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet directed Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force in Honshu to place his operational planes, in excess of those required for patrolling his assigned patrol area, under the command of his Commander FIFTY FIRST Air Flotilla for immediate movement to the Kyushu area.\*\*\*\*

At about 1030 the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet activated SHO One and SHO Two for the base air forces.\*\*\*\*\*

CinC, Combined Fleet was not surprised by this activation order. Sometime during the preceding day he had arrived at the conclusion that

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- \* Western Attack Force No. 3 Urgent Battle Report (October 12th) Forwarded by Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 130200 October 1944, WDC Document 160579.
  - \*\* Commander Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch Summary 130200, October 1944, to SIXTH Base Air Force WDC Document 160579.
  - \*\*\* Merit Report FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group Formosa Air Battle October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012, NA 12275.
  - \*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121015 October 1944 to Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force, FIFTY FIRST Air Flotilla, (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 340), WDC Document 161644 NA 12258.
  - \*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121030 October 1944 to Combined Fleet, (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd No. 342), WDC Document 160137.



the SHO Operations should be activated for the base air forces. Since the SHO Two alert had been issued on the 10th by his Chief of Staff, he had felt that the activation order would also be issued by his Chief of Staff. But when early morning arrived without the activation order having been issued by his Chief of Staff he grew concerned lest he be considered derelict in not issuing the order himself.\* Whether he now, as a consequence of this situation, telegraphed his Chief of Staff that "the orders to begin the operations be issued at Hiyoshi after a thorough discussion of the matter with the Naval General Staff,"\* as stated by his Deputy Chief of Staff who was with him at Shinchiku, or whether he issued these instructions to his Chief of Staff after he had been queried by that officer as to the advisability of activating the base air force alone as stated by himself, is not clear.\*\* However, it is clear that he directed his Chief of Staff to issue the necessary activation orders.

This action by CinC Combined Fleet is extremely interesting, for it shows conclusively that the intention of this commander at this time, obviously concurred in by Imperial General Headquarters Navy Section (Naval General Staff), was to attempt the destruction of the Allied carrier force by the employment of naval land-based air power alone, without awaiting the full activation of the SHO Operations by Imperial General Headquarters. As has been pointed out earlier, such action was provided for in Combined Fleet's basic SHO plan of operations. But, at the time that CinC, Combined Fleet directed his Chief of Staff "to issue the orders from Hiyoshi" he had only limited information concerning the composition of the Allied carrier forces which had struck Okinawa and northern Luzon and no information whatsoever concerning the movements of the Allied amphibious forces which had been observed in the Wakde-Hollandia area on October 9th. A study of his preliminary plans shows that CinC, Combined Fleet had expected Allied air operations by carrier task forces to be commenced about this time to be followed by a landing in the central or southern Philippines. Consequently, he should have expected that, should the base air forces now be committed and their action fail to secure the desired objective of destroying the Allied carrier force, not only would the landing surely follow, but the Combined Fleet would then have to execute its assigned mission in the full SHO Operations with a depleted air force, thus prejudicing the chances of success. And yet, despite these considerations, and despite the lack of adequate information, he wished that the SHO plans for the activation of the Base Air Forces alone be made effective (by inference) as soon as practicable. Why did he do this? No definite answer on this is available but it seems highly probable that:

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\* Statements of Japanese Officials on World War II, Vol. IV, Military History Section FEC, page 20, Statement of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, IJN, October 10th, 1949.

\*\* The End of the Imperial Navy by Admiral Soemu Toyoda, IJN, pages 149-154. Published in Tokyo, April 1950.



(a) He had confidence that his land-based aircraft, and particularly the "T" Force, would be effective against carrier-based aircraft. This was stated succinctly by the Deputy Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet who, it will be remembered, was with CinC, Combined Fleet at Shinchiku. The Deputy stated, in 1949, "The attack by the American task force at that time was carried out because the enemy had underestimated our air power. We rejoiced thinking that the opportunity had come for successfully carrying out counterattack employing the 'T' Attack Force."\*

(b) He felt that if "he could deal a serious blow to your surface task force (TF 38), that would widen the gap between your landing attempt and also shorten the distance between the stepping stones by which you made your advance to Japan."\*\*

(c) He presumably felt that the location of the Allied carrier task force at this time placed it in range of land-based aircraft from north, west and south, a situation which might not obtain again.

(d) He presumably felt that this was not a vital decision for, should such preliminary air strikes against the Allied carrier force fail, he could cancel SHO One and SHO Two for the base air forces alone, at which time if deemed necessary the correct SHO Operation would be activated by Imperial General Headquarters.

Such reasoning by CinC, Combined Fleet (and by the Naval Section of Imperial General Headquarters as well) was of doubtful correctness. It was made possible through a minor provision in the Combined Fleet SHO plans. The basic SHO plans of Imperial General Headquarters called for a destruction objective to be accomplished by the simultaneous employment of all forces both surface and air, including land and carrier-based aircraft against an Allied landing at the time of landing. In order to accomplish this objective the SHO plans called for the retirement of the major portion of the land-based aircraft during the earlier phases of carrier attack, so that they would be available for the simultaneous all-out attack by all forces.

The minor Combined Fleet provision, despite the above long and comprehensive plans, permitted the entire SHO concept, as above expressed, to be set aside. How it was that CinC, Combined Fleet could institute this minor provision deviating from the basic SHO concept - which provision became a major one by reason of its effectuation is not understood. For by inserting it, a breakdown of the detailed coordination necessary for the success of the SHO Operation was made possible.

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\* Statements of Japanese Officials on World War II, Vol. IV, Military History Section FEC, page 20, Statement of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, IJN, October 10th, 1949.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 75, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Admiral Soemu Toyoda, IJN, Vol. II, page 318.



It should be clear that it is unwise in naval operations to employ less than maximum forces in decisive action against what might be expected to be superior enemy forces. CinC, Combined Fleet well knew the strength of the Allied carrier task force because of its operations against Japanese island positions in the Pacific during the past year including operations in September against the Philippines. In all cases Allied carrier-based air power had been highly effective against Japanese land air power (Truk, Marianas, Luzon) and Japanese carrier-based air power (Midway, Battle of Philippine Sea). But, in addition to this carrier-based air power, there would also be the concentrated effective AA gun power, not only of the carrier force, but also of the amphibious forces as well. Since the ultimate aim of Japanese power was the prevention of an Allied landing within the areas covered by the SHO plans, does it not seem correct that the full force of the Japanese air and naval power should have been hurled, as provided in the basic SHO plans, against the amphibious forces rather than against the carriers? Was this not a case of incorrect physical objectives (targets)? For, in view of his previous experiences with Allied carriers, CinC, Combined Fleet had little reason to expect other than limited success against them, and in fact should he persist in such an attack he stood a great chance of losing so many of his planes as to insure thereby the success of the Allied landing. And even should he gain limited success, such limited success was extremely unlikely to prevent a continuation of the landing operations by the Allied amphibious forces. It is an old military precept that it is not always wise to deal with the enemy by first destroying his elements of strength, for success may still be possible by first disposing of elements of weakness. And, in this case, were not the elements of weakness the Allied amphibious forces at the point of landing?

Finally, does it not seem surprising, in view of the developing situation and the great responsibilities which were his and in further view of the fact that "communications between Formosa and Hiyoshi were unsatisfactory and facilities for obtaining radio intelligence at Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Headquarters were also inadequate,"\* that CinC, Combined Fleet did not return at once to Hiyoshi and assume direct command rather than leave the general conduct of the operations of the Combined Fleet to the lesser hands of his Chief of Staff? Was this not inherent in his function as CinC, Combined Fleet? And is it not surprising that Imperial General Headquarters did not order his return?

That he concurs in this view is clear for he stated later, "Looking back at it in the light of the consequences it was not proper for me to have been absent from headquarters for a period of close to twenty days on the eve of the Leyte operations."\*

At 1110 the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet directed Commander Mobile Force to place all operational aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR under

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\* Admiral Soemu Toyoda, ex-IJN, The End of the Imperial Navy, (Tokyo, 1950), pages 149-154.



the operational command of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.\*

CinC, Combined Fleet was satisfied with this distribution of his carrier-based aircraft. The fact that he was so, confirms the idea expressed previously that he had made a prearranged plan for commitment of his base air forces in advance of full SHO activation if a favorable opportunity arose to destroy the Allied carrier forces by such action, and that this plan provided also for employing the carrier air groups in these operations from shore bases.

At 1115, October 12th, the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet directed the Commander China Area Fleet to concentrate its entire fighter strength in Formosa where it was to operate under the operational command of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. He further directed that the date of movement into Formosa would be as directed by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.\*\*

CinC, Combined Fleet could now see that practically all of the combat strength of his base air forces in the Empire and in China, as well as a major part of his carrier air strength was being concentrated in Kyushu and Formosa.

During the remainder of the day he awaited further results of the searches being conducted from Kyushu, Okinawa, Formosa, and the Philippines. At about 1720 he received word that a Taito search plane had sighted an enemy force of one BB, two CA and three DD, bearing 100°(T) distant ninety-six miles from Taito.\*\*\* This was gratifying because he knew that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had already launched his attack by "T" Force planes from Kyushu and had made arrangements for the immediate refueling of these planes at Tainan, Taichu, Shinchiku and Takao bases after they had landed from the attack. He knew that Commander SW Area Force also had, 1235, directed his Commander FIFTH Base Air Force to make an all out attack on the Allied carrier task force.\*\*\*\*

Sometime around early evening, CinC, Combined Fleet learned that three Allied carrier task groups had been located by search planes from

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- \* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121110, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 344). ZUIKAKU War Diary WDC Document 161636.
  - \*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121115, October 1944 to CinC, China Area Fleet, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161422.
  - \*\*\* Merit Report 14th Combined Air Group Formosa Air Battle October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012, NA 12275.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 121235 October 1944 to FIFTH Base Air Force, (Commander SW Area Force DesOpOrd 648). War Diary 23rd Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 160264, NA 12546.



Kanoya bearing eastnortheast, east, and eastsoutheast of Garan Bi, Formosa.\*

He knew, of course, that the "T" Force planes from Kyushu airfields would attack immediately, and awaited the results as certain of these planes were scheduled to land at Shinchiku, Formosa after having attacked. This was unfortunate from the Japanese viewpoint for it seems clear that CinC, Combined Fleet interrogated some of the aviators himself, and thereby "gathered information from returned crews."\*\* These crews grossly exaggerated their successes and gave CinC, Combined Fleet a false impression as to their effectiveness. It is not believed that this was done deliberately, but was more the result (a) of the difficulty of making correct estimates of damage achieved by air operations at night especially when under heavy AA fire and (b) of the enthusiasms of combat pilots especially when being questioned by the CinC, Combined Fleet, or by high staff officers.

It is not clear whether CinC, Combined Fleet received the total early claims of damage done by the attacking "T" Force, but as these claims were received at Tokyo it is highly probable that they were also received by him. These claims were that the attacks had been highly successful; that ten ships had been set afire,\*\*\* four of which sank. These four ships were presumed to be carriers.\*\*\*\* Actually, all attacks had failed and had been driven off without having made a single hit nor of accomplishing any material damage whatsoever.\*\*\*\*\*

Sometime during the early evening CinC, Combined Fleet learned that no FIFTH Base Air Force attacks had been made because preparations could not be completed in time.\*

(b) Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 12th.

During the morning of the 12th Commander Mobile Force took no important action but awaited the results of the day's operations.

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- \* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government October 1947 Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\* Statements of Japanese Officials in World War II Vol. IV Military History Section FEC page 20, Statement of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, IJN, October 10th, 1949.
  - \*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22 Item B.
  - \*\*\*\* Ibid, also Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government October 1947 Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diaries of Allied carrier task groups concerned.



At about 1145 he received a dispatch from CinC, Combined Fleet which directed him to place all operational aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR under the operational command of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.\*

He therefore consulted with staff representatives of the SIXTH Base Air Force and arranged that CARDIV THREE aircraft (653rd Air Group) would be based at Kagoshima and that CARDIV FOUR aircraft (634th Air Group) would be based at Kanoya, Kokubo, Kagoshima and Ibusuki.\*\*

He studied his availability reports and agreed to transfer (a) from CARDIV THREE to Kagoshima twenty-six carrier-based fighters, twenty-three fighter-bombers, twenty-nine Type 14 and five Type 97 carrier attack planes; or a total of eighty-three planes of all types, (b) from CARDIV FOUR to Kanoya forty carrier-based fighters; to Kobubu nine carrier-based bombers; to Kagoshima ten Type 14 carrier attack planes and (c) to Ibusuki twelve reconnaissance seaplanes or a total of seventy-one planes of all types. This was a grand total of 154 planes.\*\*\* If the figures given by Commander Mobile Force in interrogation in 1945 are approximately correct there were a total of 260 planes in these two air groups.\*\*\*\* It is of interest that a study of all sources available to this analysis supports the approximate accuracy of this figure. Analysis figures indicate somewhere between 250-260 planes. This would give an operational availability of 154/260 or about sixty per cent which, while low for American carrier standards, was a fair average for Japanese land-based planes at this time, as evidenced by the records of the various Japanese air units during this operation.

At this same time since he considered it necessary to continue the training of air crews, he decided to withhold from the transfer those flying personnel qualified to be instructors.\*\*\*\*\*

He also issued instructions to his Commander SECOND Striking Force

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121110 October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, ZUIKAKU War Diary October 1st-25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636 NA 11973.

\*\* Senior Staff Officer SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 121536 October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, ZUIKAKU War Diary, October 1st-25th, 1944, WDC Document 161636 NA 11973.

\*\*\* Ranking Staff Officer, SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 121536 October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161636.

\*\*\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 55, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, IJN, Vol. I, page 220.

\*\*\*\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, IJN, to Mr. Clarke H. Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, U.S. Naval War College, no date, but about May 23rd, 1952.



to assign two destroyers to assist in transferring the 634th Air Group.\* He issued no instructions this day to the 653rd Air Group but did so the following day.

Commander Mobile Force did not, at first, approve of these preparations. He had had no idea that his carrier aircraft were to be placed under Commander SIXTH Base Air Force and transferred to southern Kyushu and this order came as a clear surprise to him.\*\* He therefore called the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet at Hiyoshi by telephone and "pointed out that the carrier force would become incapable of sortie and queried if this would not interfere with operations.\*\*\* This shows plainly that Commander Mobile Force had not been consulted in the present plans any more than he had been consulted in the basic planning.\*\*\* In reply to this query Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet replied that there was no thought of employing the carrier force. Commander Mobile Force accepted this assurance and since he knew that the basic plans permitted the transfer of his carrier planes to southern Kyushu should SHO One or Two be activated\*\*\*\* he hoped that this transfer now ordered was in furtherance of these plans.

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force, October 12th.

The FIRST Striking Force remained in the Lingga area and continued its training as discussed under October 10th.

Commander FIRST Striking Force continued to maintain a close watch on the developing situation as discussed under October 11th.

(2) Operations of the Commander Main Force, October 12th.

During the day Commander Main Force, who it will be remembered was also Commander Mobile Force and therefore familiar with the dispatches received by that commander, likewise took no important action but awaited developments.

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\* Commander Mobile Force DesOpOrd 54, October 12th, 1944. Referred to in Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 121201 October 1944, (DesOpOrd 4 to COMDESRON ELEVEN). DESRON ELEVEN War Diary, WDC Document 161715.

\*\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, IJN, to Mr. Clarke H. Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, U.S. Naval War College, no date, but about May 23rd, 1952.

\*\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 29, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Captain Mitsuo Fuchida, IJN, Vol. I, page 128.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944, Appendix II (Outline for concentration of Base Air Forces for SHO Operations) ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945, (NACHI Document).



At about 1145 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch directing Commander Mobile Force to place all operational aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR under the operational command of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.\*

In view of Commander Mobile Force's conference with the staff of the SIXTH Base Air Force he knew that his CARDIV THREE aircraft were to be based at Kagoshima, and his CARDIV FOUR aircraft at Kanoya, Kokubu, Kagoshima and Ibusuki. He directed his carrier division commanders to expedite this transfer.

At about 1230 he received word that Commander SECOND Striking Force had ordered the SHIMOTSUKI and KAYA to transfer the 634th Air Group to Tokushima and Kagoshima, and to Iwakuni and Kagoshima respectively.\*\* This was unsatisfactory not only to him, but also the COMCARDIV FOUR since COMCARDIV FOUR had been working, during the past few days, with the KASHI instead of the SHIMOTSUKI. It is commented on here merely to indicate what appears to have been poor staff work.

COMCARDIV FOUR therefore, at 1439, requested Commander SECOND Striking Force and COMDESRON ELEVEN to hasten the dispatch of the KAYA to Iwakuni and the KASHI to Tokushima to transfer the 634th Air Group to Kagoshima and Ibusuki air bases.\*\*\* During the early evening he was advised by COMDESRON ELEVEN that these destroyers were being ordered to the designated bases as requested.\*\*\*\*

(3) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force,  
October 12th.

During the night and forenoon the SECOND Striking Force plus CARDIV FOUR less DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE continued fueling at Kure. DESDIV FORTY-ONE was missing because it was at sea escorting the light cruiser OYODO to Oita; DESDIV SIXTY-ONE was apparently fully fueled.

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- \* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121110 October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 344). ZUIKAKU War Diary, WDC, Document 161636.
  - \*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 121201 October 1944 to COMDESRON 11, etc. (Commander SECOND Striking Force DesOpOrd 4) WDC Document 161715.
  - \*\*\* COMCARDIV 4 Dispatch 121439, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, COMDESRON 11, DESRON 11 War Diary, October 1944, WDC Document 161715.
  - \*\*\*\* COMDESRON 11 Dispatches 121700 and 121958 October 1944 to COMCARDIV 4, Commander SECOND Striking Force, DESRON 11, War Diary, October 1944, WDC Document 161715.



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At 0300 in accordance with CinC, Combined Fleet's directive to cancel the sortie alert for the SECOND Striking Force and CARDIV FOUR (less air units) he cancelled his sortie alert, and directed CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, DESRON ONE less KASUMI and HATSUHARU which were on special missions, DESRON ELEVEN and DESDIV SIXTY-ONE to proceed to Iwakuni,\* which was the naval anchorage near Kure. The HATSUSHIMO was in drydock at Kure.

At about 1145 he received word that all operational aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR were to be placed under the operational command of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.\*\*

He therefore, at 1201, ordered the SHIMOTSUKI and KAYA to transfer the 634th Air Group to Tokushima and Kagoshima, and to Iwakuni and Kagoshima respectively.\*\*\* This order was the result of poor staff work for it failed to include the KASHI which had been working with CARDIV FOUR, and was presently at sea.

Therefore, when at about 1500 he received COMCARDIV FOUR's dispatch requesting the KASHI and KAYA, he took no action but awaited the action of COMDESRON ELEVEN.\*\*\*\* At about 1730 he noted that COMDESRON ELEVEN had complied with this request.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 2030 he probably learned of the torpedoing, at 1935 off Tokyo Bay, of the destroyer FUYUTSUKI of DESDIV FORTY-ONE.\*\*\*\*\* This destroyer succeeded in reaching Kure for repairs, but her damages were sufficiently serious to keep her out of the Battle for Leyte Gulf. This left but one destroyer, the SHIMOTSUKI, in that destroyer division.

(c) Operations of Commander Base Air Forces, October 12th.

(1) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force

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- \* Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 120300, October 1944 to SECOND Striking Force (Commander SECOND Striking Force SigDesOrd 9) WDC Document 161715.
  - \*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121110, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 344) ZUIKAKU War Diary WDC Document 161636.
  - \*\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 121201, October 1944 to COMDESRON 11, etc. (Commander SECOND Striking Force DesOpOrd 4) WDC Document 161715.
  - \*\*\*\* COMCARDIV 4 Dispatch 121439, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 11, WDC Document 161715.
  - \*\*\*\*\* COMDESRON 11 Dispatch 121700, October 1944 to COMCARDIV 4.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary OYODO, October 1st-20th, 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11793.

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At 0000, October 12th, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force at his headquarters at Takao, Formosa, commenced reestimating the situation. He had to determine whether the contacts on three separate groups of the enemy task force reported by radar night search seaplanes southeast of Formosa during the evening\* warranted a change in his present orders to the "T" Force. It will be remembered that he had ordered that force to move to Okinawa from southern Kyushu after dawn, and to conduct dusk and night attacks against TF 38 from Okinawa.\*\*

At 0055 he ordered his commander at Kanoya to reinforce further the air strength at Okinawa by sending five patrol planes to that base as soon as possible, these planes to conduct short-range search enroute if practicable.\*\*\* This transfer of patrol planes from Kanoya to Okinawa was sound for it now appeared that at least three of the four enemy task groups estimated to be in the attacking force had definitely moved from Okinawa-Kyushu area to the vicinity of Formosa-northern Luzon. Aircraft operating from Okinawa could cover this area far more effectively than could aircraft operating from Kyushu.

Sometime after this Commander SIXTH Base Air Force decided to modify his orders to the "T" Force. Since contacts of the previous twelve hours showed the enemy task force to be moving steadily westward toward Formosa with its 2245 location about 350 miles southwest of Okinawa, he was now convinced that Formosa or Luzon would be the next target. Therefore at 0135 he directed the "T" Force instead of waiting until dawn, to move immediately to Okinawa and to seize any favorable opportunity to attack the enemy.\*\*\*\* This decision to move the "T" Force to Okinawa during darkness offered no particular hazard since it was specially trained for attack operations at night or in bad weather. It had already demonstrated its ability to deploy at night when, on October 10th, it had successfully retired from southern Kyushu during darkness before the Allied attack on Okinawa.

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 111830, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, FEC Historical Division Microfilm File unnumbered.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 120055, October 1944, to Kanoya Base, FEC Historical Division Microfilm File unnumbered.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 120135, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, FEC Historical Division Microfilm File unnumbered.



The new orders to the "T" Force which permitted attack under any favorable conditions rather than only at dusk or night allowed the Commander of the "T" Force discretion in selecting the earliest opportune time. Due to the special training of his "T" Force this might well not be until dusk, but the change would permit him to take advantage of weather, or other favorable attack conditions, which might develop during the day.

At about 0320 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received another contact. This one reported an enemy force at 0240 in position Latitude 20°-10'N, Longitude 123°-10'E.\* This position was about eighty-five miles southwest of the 2245 position of an enemy task group. Commander SIXTH Base Air Force presumably considered that this contact represented the fourth task group which was reportedly in the area, but had not heretofore been located. However, he may have felt that it was possibly one of the previously sighted groups which had turned to a southwesterly course. In either case it is clear that this latter contact supported the estimate that Formosa or Luzon would be attacked at dawn. Actually the contact as reported was very much in error since it was eighty miles bearing 192°(T) from the most southerly group of TF 38. The reason for this large error is not known.

As a result of the contacts above discussed, a general air raid alert was established throughout Formosa at 0334 by Commander Takao Naval Guard District.\*\*

At 0530 two land reconnaissance planes took off from Shinchiku to attack the enemy task force. Who ordered this attack or what its specific purpose was is not indicated in the data available. One of the planes developed engine trouble and returned to base at 0830; the other failed to return.\*\*\*

At about 0540 five two-engine land bombers of FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group departed Tainan to search the sector 106°-163°(T) to a distance of 600 miles from Garan Bi, the southern tip of Formosa.\*\*\* Shortly thereafter five carrier type attack planes, also of the FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group, took off from Taito to search the sector 078°-203°(T) to a distance of 250 miles from that base.\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 120326, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, FEC Historical Division Microfilm File unnumbered.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, Kobi Naval Air Group, October 12th, 1944, WDC Document 160495.

\*\*\* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 130200 October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\* Commander 14th Combined Air Group Dispatch 112258, October 1944 to 14th Combined Air Group, WDC Document 160495.



At 0630 six land-attack planes of 708th Attack Unit Detachment at Shinchiku took off from that base to conduct search. This search was to cover the sector between  $092\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  and  $163^{\circ}$ (T) to a distance of 600 miles.\*

At about the same time Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla on Okinawa launched his search. For reasons not apparent he decided to cover two sectors. One carrier type reconnaissance plane and one land reconnaissance plane departed to cover the sector between  $102^{\circ}$ - $136^{\circ}$  (T) to a distance of 300 miles; two more land reconnaissance planes took off to cover the sector  $182^{\circ}$ - $226^{\circ}$ (T) to 300 miles.\*\* These land reconnaissance planes were most likely from the group which had been ordered to Okinawa from Kanoya by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force at 0055 that morning.\*\*\* Why Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla limited himself to such short-range searches and failed to conduct a long-range search in an effort to regain contact with TF 38 last reported at 0240, using the seven two-engine land bombers which had been sent to him from Kanoya on the previous day, is nowhere explained. Did not the existing situation require such a long-range search?

It will be observed that on this day the Japanese searches covered reasonably well the areas to the eastward of Formosa and the Philippines but they made only slight provision for possible Allied action against the Nansei Shoto and, based on the data available, no provision whatsoever for Allied action against southern Kyushu. The weather in these areas was generally clear and there was no reason why searches should not have been made excepting the apparent fact that the Japanese had decided that TF 38 was following the course of action which they had forecast, viz. attacks on the Nansei Shoto, then on Formosa, then on the Philippines. Therefore there would be no attacks on the Nansei Shoto or Kyushu. While this happened to be a correct evaluation of Allied plans it was not a sound procedure for the high mobility of TF 38 and its inherent power in whole or in its separate groups gave it a very real capability of striking almost anywhere and everywhere in the Japanese archipelago from Kyushu south to the central Philippines.

At about 0645 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force intercepted a Tainan report indicating that the Allied task force was about to attack Formosa. This report stated that fifty enemy planes had been sighted proceeding west.\*\*\*\* Thereafter commencing at about 0700 numerous reports were

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- \* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 130200, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.
  - \*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla, SigOrd No. 28, October 12th, 1944, WDC Document 160137.
  - \*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 120055 to Kanoya Base, FEC Historical Division Microfilm File unnumbered.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander Tainan Air Group Dispatch 120630, October 1944 to Kobi Air Group, WDC Document 160495.



received which indicated that the enemy was attacking many different air facilities in Formosa. At 0708 Takao Naval Guard District reported fifty enemy fighters east of Toko heading north,\* and at 0709 the same command reported sixty enemy aircraft southwest of Heito heading northwest.\*\* At 0727 Commander FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group reported that the Tainan Air Group was engaging the enemy\*\*\* and at 0735 he reported in addition that a large enemy formation of thirty aircraft was heading toward Takao out of the sun.\*\*\*\*

As has been noted this attack was no surprise to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. Since Formosa had been alerted at 0334 to its probability he had dispatched his search planes to cover the area in which the enemy task force would operate for such an attack, and he had ordered his major striking force, the "T" Force, to advance to Okinawa and attack. Now he had only (a) to await the expected contact report from his search planes and then (b) to carry out the remainder of his orders from CinC Combined Fleet i.e., to destroy the enemy.

Whether or not he knew that the "T" Force had not yet advanced to Okinawa is not indicated in the data available. For reasons not known the "T" Force was still in Kyushu.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 0830 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received the first contact report from his day search. A Shinchiku based land attack plane reported sighting at 0800 two large ships of unidentified type, very probably carriers.\*\*\*\*\* The position as reported in the data available is garbled so that its accuracy cannot be determined.

Shortly thereafter at about 0915 a second contact was reported. A carrier type attack plane from the Taito search reported sighting at 0845 a large enemy force including carriers bearing 086°(T) sixty miles from Taito.\*\*\*\*\* This position was about fifteen miles west of the most northerly task group of TF 38.

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\* Commander Takao Naval Guard District Dispatch 120708, October 1944 to All Units, WDC Document 160495.

\*\* Ibid, Dispatch 120709, October 1944.

\*\*\* Commander 14th Combined Air Group Dispatch 120727, October 1944 to All Units, WDC Document 160495.

\*\*\*\* Ibid Dispatch 120735, October 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\*\* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 130200, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\*\* Merit Report for 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.



At about this same time the Senior Staff Officer, SIXTH Base Air Force at Kanoya correctly decided not to advance the "T" Force to Okinawa but to mount the attack from southern Kyushu. He did this because, at 0900, he had received word from Army sources that an air raid alert had been established at Okinawa\* and he felt that since the "T" Force might be attacked while moving to that base or while on the ground there, the original plan of staging through Okinawa should be revised. It is of interest that no Allied planes attacked Okinawa on this day.

Additional reports of the air action underway were received by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force during this time. Shinchiku Air Base reported\*\* later that between 0700 and 0830 that base had been under attack with the following results (a) two hangars set afire, one hangar and one BOQ destroyed, (b) no damage to the runways, (c) thirty-eight fighters had engaged about one hundred enemy fighters and had shot down twenty-two fighters and had probably shot down six other fighters while losing eighteen fighters shot down (five of which had crashed into Allied planes) and five fighters damaged, (d) two enemy dive bombers had been shot down by AA fire. This gave a total loss to Japanese forces over Shinchiku of twenty-three planes, whereas they believed that the Allies had suffered a loss of thirty planes in the same operations. As has been pointed out earlier these claims were very incorrect and misleading since the Allies lost but twenty-two fighters over all Formosa.

At 0958 a report from Tainan stated that that area had been attacked but that no damage had been received.\*\*\*

During the morning, while awaiting the development of an opportune moment to attack the enemy task force, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received certain important dispatches from CinC Combined Fleet:

(1) At 1015 orders to Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force in Honshu to put the operational strength of his command above that required to conduct his patrols into FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla and to direct that flotilla to deploy as soon as possible to Kyushu.\*\*\*\*

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-2z, Item B.

\*\* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 130200, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\* Tainan Air Group Dispatch 120958, October 1944 to Kobi Air Group, WDC Document 160495.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121015, October 1944 to Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force and Commander 51st Air Flotilla, WDC Document 161644 (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 340).



(2) At 1030 orders activating SHO One and SHO Two for the base air forces.\*

(3) At 1110 orders to Commander Mobile Force to place all operational aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR under the operational command of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.\*\*

(4) At 1115 orders to Commander China Area Fleet to deploy his entire fighter strength to Formosa where it would be under the operational command of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.\*\*\*

How much if any discussion of the situation was engaged in by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force with CinC Combined Fleet by telephone or other interior means is not known, but it seems reasonable to assume that such took place. The reports of action received during the morning indicated that while some damage had been done, it was not serious. Moreover in the Shinchiku air battle his pilots had apparently scored a victory over the enemy even though outnumbered nearly three to one. He did not know, of course, that the report of the Shinchiku battle was highly optimistic.

It is of interest to note here that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had been in command of that air force for but four months and this was not only his first combat operation but, worse than that, it was his first experience with land-based air forces.\*\*\*\* Possibly he was unaware of the need for expert evaluation of pilots' reports to determine the actual facts, and he was operating under the handicap of having part of his staff on Formosa and part still at Kanoya. As has been pointed out before, the intelligence section of his staff on Formosa had not yet been well organized.\*\*\*\*\* What influence he may have exerted on CinC, Combined Fleet's decision to commit fully the base air forces under his command to the destruction of TF 38 is not known, but it could well have been considerable.

The activation of SHO One and Two for the base air forces at 1030 by CinC Combined Fleet was probably done on the recommendation of, or

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121030, October 1944 to Combined Fleet etc, WDC Document 160137 (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 342).

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121110, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force and Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161636 (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 344).

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121115, October 1944 to Commander China Area Fleet and Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161422 (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 346).

\*\*\*\* USSBS NAV No. 115, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN, Vol. II, page 504.

\*\*\*\*\* Ibid, page 501.



at least with the concurrence of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. With the activation, the other orders merely made available to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force additional air units to accomplish the destruction of the enemy task force. The basic SHO plans had provided for the movement of SEVENTH Base Air Force units and also, where used as base air forces, of the air units of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR into Kyushu.\* The employment of the fighter strength of the China Area Fleet under Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had also been decided upon some time prior to September 23rd, 1944.\*\*

During the interval when Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was receiving these directives from CinC Combined Fleet, he also received at about 1100 information from Kyushu that the "T" Force had commenced attack operations. As noted earlier the plans for the attack had been changed due to a reported air raid alert at Okinawa and the attack had been launched directly from Kyushu with the planes to land on Formosa after the attack.\*\*\* At about 1030 the advance "T" Force search took off from Kanoya to locate the enemy and guide the attack groups to their targets. This search group was composed of four carrier-type reconnaissance planes and one two-engine land bomber. It was ordered to search the sector 208°-230°(T) from Toi Misaki (Kanoya) to a distance of 820 miles and establish contact with the enemy.\*\*\*\* Under the plan these aircraft would be followed by the attack groups which would take off about two hours later.

At 1145 one carrier type reconnaissance plane of the TWELFTH Reconnaissance Unit departed Kanoya to search for the enemy task force.\*\*\*\*\* Whether or not Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was informed of this sortie is not indicated in the data available nor are the bearings and range of the sector searched. The plane returned to base at 1830 having made no contact. From Kanoya this plane had insufficient range to cover the area in which TF 38 was operating at this time.

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\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86, Air Combat Regulations for SHO Operations - Appendix 2; Outline for concentration of Base Air Forces for SHO Operations, August 4th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Operation Order No. 12, September 23rd, 1944, Appendix 2 - No. 1 Attack Organization, also Central Air Agreement of July 24th, Appendix 2 to Supplement Manual General Headquarters Navy Section Directive 126 No. 435.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* "T" Force DesOpOrd No. 14, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary 12th Reconnaissance Unit, Kanoya Detachment, October 12th-15th 1944, WDC Document 160381.



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At 1149, with no further contact reports, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force directed his commander at Shinchiku to launch an additional search of five aircraft as soon as possible. This search was directed to cover the sector from that base 101°-168°(T) to a distance of 400 miles.\*

The circumstances under which he issued this order are not entirely clear. Shortly after 0800 Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla at Shinchiku had lost communication with each of his search planes in the sectors on either side of the one which had reported the 0800 contact.\*\* Whether or not this fact had been reported to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force at Takao is not known. Failure to report this fact, if such occurred, could have been due to the fact that Shinchiku itself was under attack and Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla may have been fully occupied meeting that attack. However, it should be apparent that, even if Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had not received information relative to the loss of contact with the morning search planes, he still might have ordered this second search to reestablish contact with the enemy force, since he had had no information on it for nearly three hours. Probably due to lack of available aircraft, this search was not launched.\*\*\*

The failure of the Japanese to maintain contact was not a result of improper planning. Detailed and most complete instructions had been promulgated covering this matter.\*\*\*\* Reliance for tracking was placed on special tracking planes which were to be dispatched after initial contact was made. These planes were to maintain position fifty to one hundred miles from the enemy and were to close the enemy from varying directions every hour or half hour, making use of clouds, sun, weather, very high or low altitudes to avoid interception by the enemy. A system was also provided for tracking by search planes other than the one making the contact. For reasons not known, but in at least some cases due to a shortage of aircraft, separate tracking planes were not used. Daylight tracking of TF 38 was generally not possible due to the inability of the Japanese to remain in a tracking position without being shot down or driven off. Had special tracking planes been used they might have proved more effective,

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\* Takao Air Group Dispatch 121149, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, (SIXTH Base Air Force SigOpOrd 10), WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group; Searches and Patrols of F's (Shinchiku) Sector, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 130200, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86; Air Combat Regulations for SHO Operations, Part II Cl, August 4th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Document).

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but the limitations on the ability of tracking planes to perform their missions in the face of such enemy strength as was contained in TF 38 should be recognized.\*

At 1159 Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force, acting upon CinC Combined Fleet's order issued at 1015, directed Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla to take operational command of designated attack and fighter units of the SEVENTH Base Air Force and to move without delay to Kyushu.\*\* This order had actually been anticipated by Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla for that commander at 1145 had notified CinC Combined Fleet and other interested commanders that at 1200 he would depart Katori Air Base, near Tokyo, and move to Kanoya. At the same time he had directed all units under his command to move as fast as possible to the designated bases in Kyushu.\*\*\*

At 1226 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force directed his forces in Formosa to make all necessary arrangements to service aircraft of the "T" Force which would land on Formosa after carrying out a night attack on the enemy task force.\*\*\*\* It might be noted here that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's earlier modification of orders to the "T" Force which gave to that commander more discretion in the type and time of his attacks, had not actually changed the "T" Force attack plan, since the "T" Force commander had already decided to carry out a night attack as originally ordered.

Commencing at about 1230 and until 1330\*\*\*\*\* the "T" Force attack groups took off from Kanoya. These groups which were from 501st, 703rd, and 708th Attack Units, numbered fifty-six planes;\*\*\*\*\* They were augmented by the 262nd Attack Unit and NINETY-EIGHTH Air Regiment,\*\*\*\*\* which took off from Okinawa.\*\*\*\*\* The NINETY-EIGHTH Air Regiment was

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- \* Long Range Air Reconnaissance and Scouting Instructions (USF 11) 1946, paragraph 617.
  - \*\* Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force Dispatch 121159, October 1944 to SEVENTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161644.
  - \*\*\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 121145, October 1944 to CinC Combined Fleet, Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces, etc., WDC Document 160258.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 121226, October 1944 to Commander Western Attack Force THREE - FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Reports of 752 Air Group Units, June 1944 - January 1945, WDC Document 160364.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, SECOND Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



an independent Army unit under the operational control of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. How these latter two units, which numbered forty-five planes happened to be at Okinawa is not known but it seems probable that they had already departed for that base, when the decision was made in the morning to mount the attack from Kanoya. The total attack strength of the above five groups was one hundred and one aircraft of which sixty-seven carried torpedoes, and ten carried bombs. The remaining twenty-four were path-finders and control aircraft used to direct the attack.\* The physical objective of this attack, TF 38, was known to be some seven hundred miles from Kanoya and therefore it was apparent to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that it would take this force five to six hours to reach the objective area.

During the early afternoon Commander SIXTH Base Air Force undoubtedly received additional reports of the progress of the Allied attack on various air facilities and ports of Formosa. Although he had received no further contact reports of the enemy since 0845, it must have been quite evident from the progress of the enemy attack that a large enemy task force was still in the waters to the east of Formosa. He had now committed a large part of his "T" Force, the best trained of his air units, to an attack under low visibility conditions for which they were specially trained and he awaited the results with confidence.

At about 1305 he likely received Commander Southwest Area's orders to the FIFTH Base Air Force in the Philippines. Following the activation of SHO One and Two for the base air forces that commander had ordered Commander FIFTH Base Air Force to destroy the enemy task force operating southeast of Formosa, employing its full strength.\*\* Whether or not Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was informed of the plans of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force or whether or not he took any action to coordinate his operations with those of that Base Air Force is not known.

At about 1600 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that his senior staff officer at Kanoya, after consultation with Commander Mobile Force or his representatives, had designated deployment bases in Kyushu for the aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR.\*\*\* He also learned in specific numbers how many planes Commander Mobile Force was turning over to him as a result of CinC Combined Fleet's order. This added up to a total of 154 aircraft including eighty-nine fighters, forty-four attack planes, nine bombers, and twelve reconnaissance sea-planes.

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\* Detailed Action Reports of 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944 - January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 121235, October 1944 to FIFTH and THIRD Base Air Forces, WDC Document 160264.

\*\*\* Senior Staff Officer, SIXTH Base Air Force, Dispatch 121536, October 1944 to Commanders SIXTH Base Air Force and Mobile Force, WDC Document 161636.



At about 1720 he received another contact report on the enemy task force. This report stated that at 1650 a search plane of the FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group from Taito had sighted an enemy force of one battleship, two cruisers, and three destroyers bearing 100°(T) distance ninety-six miles from that base. This position was about twelve miles east of the nearest group of TF 38.\* Data available does not reveal what sector this plane was searching nor its time of take-off. This contact was the last one reported by the regular day searches since the last plane of the Shinchiku search had landed at Okinawa at 1630 and the Garan Bi search planes had all returned to base by 1715 having made no contacts during the day.\*\*

The only search still in progress, at this time, was the search group of the "T" Force which had departed Kanoya at 1030. This group, operating in advance of the "T" Force attack groups, made contact by evening with three enemy task groups bearing northeast, east, and southeast of Garan Bi, distance 120-140 miles.\*\*\* The bearings, only vaguely expressed in the data available, were but partially correct, for TF 38 was northeast of Garan Bi. The distance was approximately correct.

When this information was received by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force or the "T" Force attack groups is not known. Presumably it was immediately transmitted to the latter to aid them in finding their targets.

At about 1900 the "T" Force commenced its attack on TF 38. Its planes attacked in relatively small groups rather than in a concentration. This may have been due, at least in part, to the fact that some areas of bad weather were encountered by the attacking planes\*\*\* and caused the attacking groups to become separated. Some of the planes, number unknown, were unable to find any target and failed to attack.\*\*\*\* Of the total number (106) of search (five) and attacking planes (101), forty-two failed to land at bases in Formosa as planned, and were considered as having been shot down by the Allied task force or lost at sea due to battle damage or from other causes. TF 38 claimed shooting down only twelve of these planes.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Merit Report for 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.

\*\* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 130200, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Reports of 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944 - January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Reports CTG 38.2, MOBILE, GRIDLEY, BAGLEY, Attacks on Formosa, October 12th, 1944.



The detailed claims of damage inflicted by each of the "T" Force attack groups is not known but the claims, as received at SIXTH Base Air Force headquarters at Kanoya, were that ten ships had been set afire of which four sank.\* These four were presumed to be carriers.\*\* As has been noted, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force did not have a competent staff on Formosa to evaluate properly pilots' reports. Very probably both he and CinC, Combined Fleet, to whom he must have relayed information as received, were unduly influenced by the natural enthusiasm of the returning pilots. The inherent difficulty in accurately ascertaining damage inflicted in night air attack undoubtedly assisted in forming a completely erroneous picture in the eyes of the Commanders. Actually, no ship of TF 38 received any damage whatever.\*\*\*

The effect of the greatly exaggerated claims made by the "T" Force, and accepted by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, had far reaching and unhappy consequences for the Japanese. For the acceptance of these claims removed any doubts as to the ability of land-based aircraft to destroy ultimately the enemy task force. While he had lost some 40% of his attacking force, and many additional planes had been damaged in landing at Formosa bases,\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force now believed that these losses were well worth the results achieved and visualized future successes as he made other attacks with his additional forces available in Kyushu including the planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR and the FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla. In addition, he probably expected some assistance from the Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, possibly augmented by cooperative action from the C.G. FOURTH Air Army.

At 2207 he requested that the two fighter groups, which CinC Combined Fleet had ordered at 1115 to deploy to Formosa from the China Area Fleet and report to him, commence that deployment as soon as possible. He further stated that these two groups would report to Commander FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Buureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Action Reports of TF 38 Units Concerned.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Reports of 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944 - January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\*\*\* CofS SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 122207, October 1944 to Commanders 254th and 256th Air Groups, WDC Document 161429.



At 2300 for reasons unknown he cancelled searches from Shinchiku for the following morning.\* Perhaps he believed that he could obtain adequate coverage from other bases. Perhaps he believed that after the Allied attacks of the 12th and the losses incurred by Shinchiku search planes (three had been lost) there would not be sufficient planes available on the 13th. Actually there were three land-attack planes and two land reconnaissance planes available for search.\*\*

(2) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force,  
October 12th.

As on the previous day Commander FIFTH Base Air Force was fully occupied in preparing his command for action and in conducting the designated searches as jointly agreed upon with CG FOURTH Air Army for operations prior to the activation of the SHO Operations.

His search planes reported no contacts. This was because throughout the day TF 38 had operated outside of the areas covered by the Philippines search plan. Presumably, as on previous days, he was kept informed of the contacts made by other forces.

At about 0715 he learned that Formosa was under attack by the enemy task force. This information may have afforded him some relief since it indicated that he would have at least another day and possibly more in which to prepare before the Philippines would be the target of the enemy's attack. However, this idea was short-lived for between about 0830 and 0945 he likely received the two enemy contacts made by aircraft of the SIXTH Base Air Force which placed TF 38 some 250 miles north of Luzon. This was a dangerous situation since it made possible further strikes on his northern bases similar to the one made the previous afternoon.

At about 1100 he received CinC Combined Fleet's order activating SHO One and Two for the base air forces.\*\*\* Whether or not he was informed of the other orders issued by CinC Combined Fleet at about this time, directing reinforcing of SIXTH Base Air Force from forces in Honshu and China, is not indicated.

At about 1240 Commander FIFTH Base Air Force received orders from Commander Southwest Area Force directing him to destroy the enemy task

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 122300, October 1944 to Shinchiku Air Base, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 130200, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 121030, October 1944 to Combined Fleet (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 342), WDC Document 160137.



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force southeast of Formosa employing his full strength.\* He must have anticipated such orders for the operations of the previous two days had plainly indicated that it was CinC Combined Fleet's intention to conduct a land-based aircraft battle against the enemy task force.

In accordance with these instructions Commander FIFTH Base Air Force planned to launch an attack on the 12th but because he could not complete his preparations in time, he was forced to postpone this attack for one day.\*\*

While expediting his preparations he kept close watch on the situation to the north. The three contacts made by the "T" Force search group that evening plainly indicated to him that the enemy task force was operating 120-140 miles east northeast, east, and east southeast of Garan Bi.\*\* Should this obtain on the 13th, perhaps he would be afforded an opportunity to carry out his attack.

(d) Operations of CG FOURTH Air Army, October 12th.

CG FOURTH Air Army at Manila was cooperating with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force in accordance with their joint agreement for operations prior to the activation of the SHO Operations. During the day he conducted the short-range searches required of him in this joint agreement. In addition he was undoubtedly readying his command for combat.

Information available does not indicate how well informed CG FOURTH Air Army was of the actions taking place to the north, but it seems logical to assume that Commander FIFTH Base Air Force passed on what information he had.

When CinC Combined Fleet activated SHO One and Two for the base air forces at 1030 and Commander Southwest Area Fleet at 1235 ordered Commander FIFTH Base Air Force to destroy the enemy task force, no similar orders appear to have been given to CG FOURTH Air Army by his superior, CinC Southern Army. It would appear that a situation of this nature, arising from a lack of unified command of the air forces in the Philippines, would result in considerable difficulty in coordinating the operations of the Army and Navy Air Forces. Actually in this particular case, although it does not appear that CG FOURTH Air Army received any activation

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\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 121235, October 1944 to Commanders THIRD and FIFTH Base Air Forces, WDC Document 160264.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

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of the SHO Operations at this time, this was not the case, for that Commander made plans to attack the enemy task force in cooperation with FIFTH Base Air Force on the following day.\* While this cooperation was apparently given freely, since both the CinC Southern Army and CG FOURTH Air Army had already, in view of the September attacks by the THIRD Fleet, requested authority to attack enemy carrier forces, it had only covered limited Army Air Forces. This was because Imperial General Headquarters, Army Section had refused to commit other than limited forces to such attacks prior to the activation of SHO Operations.\*\*

(4) Operations on October 13th.

(a) Operations of CinC, Combined Fleet.

In view of the evening and night attacks made by the planes of the "T" Force, CinC, Combined Fleet, at his Shinchiku headquarters, awaited verification and evaluation of the results achieved. He expected such verification and evaluation to arrive presently from his Commander SIXTH Base Air Force who would obtain the basic data from the commanders of Shinchiku, Taichu, Tainan, and Takao bases where the "T" Force had landed. At this time, as has been pointed out on October 11th, he appears to have already gained from the "T" Force pilots who had landed at Shinchiku, and perhaps from other sources, a highly erroneous impression as to the effectiveness of Japanese land-based aircraft against TF 38.

What reports he finally received are not available to this study. Units which attacked were the 262nd, 501st, 703rd, 708th Attack Units and the NINETY-EIGHTH Air Regiment, with a total of 101 planes. Fragmentary reports are available from the 501st, 703rd, and 708th Attack Units.\*\*\* These reports, which were available to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, and perhaps to CinC, Combined Fleet as well because all force units which had attacked were now on Formosa, were:

(a) 501st - Unknown.

(b) 703rd - (1) One cruiser or destroyer and one other ship (type unknown) sunk.

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\* FOURTH Air Army Operation Order A-489, October 13th, 1944, Documents from file of Lt. Col. Katsuo Sato, IJN, Staff Officer, FOURTH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\* First Demobilization Bureau Monograph, History of Army Section Imperial General Headquarters, Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-72, undated.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22 Item B.



- (2) One carrier burning in four places.
  - (3) One cruiser damaged.
- (c) 708th -
- (1) One large carrier sinking.
  - (2) One other carrier sinking.
  - (3) Seven columns of fire from direct hits.

It is not known what final report CinC, Combined Fleet received from his Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. However, anyone experienced in air operations in action knows that it is difficult, when interrogating pilots, not to be affected by the attitudes of the pilots. It is known, in this case, that the "T" Force pilots possessed an air of confidence and success which must have affected for good or ill those with whom they came in contact.

This being the case, the report of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was definitely optimistic.

On the basis of such an evaluation CinC, Combined Fleet had reason to believe that his decision to alert SHO One and SHO Two for the base air forces only and to make an all-out attack on the Allied carrier task force had been correct.

Meanwhile while awaiting further information concerning the losses suffered by the Allied carrier force he awaited reports from his search planes which were already searching from Formosa, Okinawa, the Philippines and perhaps from south Kyushu.

He knew, of course, that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had ordered, at 0314, a No. 2 Alert in Formosa and in the Nansei Shoto commencing at 0500, and that an enemy air attack was expected almost any time thereafter. He also knew at this same time, 0314, that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force planned to move the aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR to Formosa, for, in a dispatch timed 0314, that Commander directed "All air units of ..... CARDIV's THREE and FOUR will immediately prepare to move to Formosa for the purpose of carrying out sustained attacks against the enemy carrier striking force."\* Since this order meant the redeployment of the 634th and 653rd Air Groups which, by the SHO plans for SHO One or Two, were to be based initially in southern Kyushu and which at that very moment were undergoing transfer to that area, it seems wise, at this time to endeavor to analyse the situation.

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 130314, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.



In this connection it seems wise also to point out (a) that the order to move the two carrier air groups to Formosa was issued by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force from Takao, (b) that both the CinC, Combined Fleet and the Commander SIXTH Base Air Force were on Formosa, the former at Shinchiku, the latter at Takao, (c) that the movement of the carrier air groups to south Kyushu was not a departure from CinC Combined Fleet's SHO plans but was instead strictly in accordance with those plans, (d) that the movement of these carrier air groups to Formosa was not in either CinC Combined Fleet's or the basic SHO plans. This was a distinct change from the basic concept of those plans for, with the transfer of the carrier air groups to Formosa, the entire concept of the SHO plans, insofar as the employment of the Mobile Force Main Force was concerned, also changed. Now, because of this transfer of a large portion of its aircraft, the Main Force of the Mobile Force would most likely be unable to take direct and positive action against the Allied carrier force and against the Allied transports as prescribed in the SHO plans. Instead it would be forced to accomplish its objectives by deception only. Thus a minor provision of CinC, Combined Fleet's SHO plan had become the governing provision.

Since this might well have a most adverse effect on the success of the basic SHO plan, it seems impossible that it could have been ordered by anyone other than the CinC, Combined Fleet himself who appears to have directed Commander SIXTH Base Air Force to comply. Since there is no record of any dispatch ordering this action it appears highly probable that it was done by telephone from Shinchiku to Takao. This view is amply supported by CinC, Combined Fleet's commanders.

(1) By Commander Mobile Force.

"Furthermore about 150 planes from the carriers were sent to Formosa; consequently our carrier strength was greatly reduced so the operation was changed to use land-based planes more frequently instead of carrier planes. My force of carrier planes became very much weakened. Only 110 were left, so less than half remained; it was not my intention to send reinforcements to Formosa but it was by order of Toyoda.\*\*"

(2) Deputy Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet, (who was with the CinC, Combined Fleet on Formosa).

"The decision (to send carrier planes and pilots to Formosa) was made by the CinC, Combined Fleet, Toyoda.\*\*\*"

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\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 55 Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, IJN, Vol I, page 220.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 64 Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, IJN, Vol I, page 264.



## (3) Commander Carrier Division FOUR.

"That was the decision of Admiral Toyoda (to take away half of the planes."\*

Why then if the employment of these carrier planes on Formosa had not been originally contemplated did CinC, Combined Fleet modify his plans? The answer is simple. Because of his location at Shinchiku he had become unduly impressed with the results claimed by his pilots there, and possibly also by the original claims forwarded by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. He became convinced that these reports were worthy of belief and so, without waiting for further evaluation from his headquarters at Tokyo, or from the Naval General Staff, he committed the carrier planes irrevocably. This view is completely supported by his Deputy Chief of Staff who stated:

"It was thought in the beginning that Japan gave your fleet a very big loss. This was later found to be a mistake; but that thought made the decisions to send as much reinforcement as possible to give the American Fleet a bigger loss; in a word to overwhelm them....Although Admiral Toyoda perhaps did not believe that it would destroy the American task forces it was thought the most effective tactics to carry out the Philippine operations."\*\*

This decision of CinC, Combined Fleet, based as it was on unverified and unevaluated claims of his attack pilots, seems unsound since it was highly possible that daylight reconnaissance might not support the claims. It was highly possible because Japanese land-based planes had not proved successful in recent operations against Allied carrier planes and had not proved successful in night attacks against the carrier task groups.\*\*\* During the Marianas operation in June the Japanese had sent most of their best pilots to the defense of the Marianas, where they had been wiped out. The pilots remaining in the Empire who were under training were generally inferior to those employed in the Marianas.\*\*\*\* It was these pilots who constituted the Japanese land-based air power. All of this was known to CinC, Combined Fleet. In addition CinC, Combined Fleet had received no further word concerning the large Allied amphibious forces reported in the Hollandia-Wakde area on October 9th. It seems surprising that he ignored,

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\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 69 Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Chiaki Madsuda, IJN, Vol. I, page 278.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 64, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, IJN, Vol I, page 264.

\*\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 99, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Captain Mitsuo Fuchida, IJN, Vol II, page 376.

\*\*\*\* Ibid No. 87, Vol II, pages 429-430.



at this time, the possibility that TF 38 might be preparing the way for such an invasion in the southern Philippines and therefore had as his objective the destruction of Japanese planes and facilities in the Nan-sei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippines. Certainly the SHO plan had been built in part on this concept and for that reason it provided for the immediate retirement of most planes from the area attacked. Does it not also seem surprising therefore that CinC, Combined Fleet did not appreciate that, by engaging in all-out attacks on TF 38 he was, in fact, assisting that task force to succeed in its basic objective?

At about 0430 he received Commander "T" Force's order to the "T" Force wherein that commander directed (a) that a search for the Allied carrier task force, believed to consist of three to four groups, and reportedly at midnight within a 200 miles radius east of Formosa be made commencing at 1030, (b) that an additional search group take off at 1330 to reconnoiter the general situation and (c) that the "T" Attack Force remaining in Kyushu escorted by fighters depart its bases between 1200 and 1300, make a dusk attack, and then land on Formosa, Takao, Tainan, Taichu and Shinchiku.\*

At about 0730 Allied carrier planes commenced attacking Formosa.

At about 0740 CinC, Combined Fleet received word that at 0710 a plane from Formosa had sighted, in Latitude 23°-10'N, Longitude 122°-50'E, on a westerly course an enemy force consisting of two carriers, two battleships, several cruisers and destroyers, and that at 0713 the plane had sighted a second group with two carriers and several other ships.\*\*

Sometime after 0930 it is highly possible that he was informed by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that the Naval General Staff had informed his Kanoya Headquarters by telephone at 0900 that they had estimated the results of the "T" Force dusk attack on the preceding night as two enemy ships sunk; two moderately damaged.\*\*\* Since this was well below the original estimate of ten ships afire, four of which sank, it would appear as if this might have had a sobering effect on CinC, Combined Fleet's opinions as to the success of his aviators. However, the fact that he permitted the air operations for that day to be executed as planned indicates that he either disagreed with this opinion or decided to go ahead anyway.

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\* Commander "T" Force Dispatch 130400, October 1944 to "T" Force, ("T" Attack Force DesOpOrd 17) WDC Document 161445.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 11th Reconnaissance Unit, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161442.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer Second Air Fleet October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



Sometime around 1100 CinC, Combined Fleet received another contact report. This report was from the same Formosa plane that had made the 0710 and 0713 contact reports. The pilot reported that at 1040 he had sighted, in Latitude 22°-40'N, Longitude 122°-38'E, an Allied carrier task group consisting of two carriers, two battleships and two destroyers.\*

What effect these contacts (0710, 0713 and 1040) had on CinC, Combined Fleet's mental processes is not known. However, since they confirmed the presence of roughly two groups, it would seem as if these reports had been received with considerable satisfaction as they tended to support his decision for all-out attack. He had been advised by Imperial General Headquarters that there were probably four task groups in the Allied carrier force; his search planes had located three or four of these task groups on the previous day; now in daylight his search planes could discover but two - or at the most three - of the four carrier groups. Where were the others? Perhaps he decided now that, despite the opinion of the Naval General Staff, the claims of his aviators were reasonably correct, and that one or two Allied carrier task groups had been forced to retire.

During the day the Japanese estimated that about 600 Allied planes had struck Formosa.\*\* This estimate was low for TF 38 had actually launched 974 sorties most of which had struck Formosa, although some had struck Pescadores Islands as well as Miyako Jima and Ishigaki Shima.

Between 1826 and 1940 (evening twilight) CinC, Combined Fleet knew that if all went well certain of his planes were attacking TF 38. Actually since the attack groups had departed around noon it seems correct to say that at this time CinC, Combined Fleet knew that forty-three "T" Force planes had departed Kyushu and 170 FIFTH Base Air Force and Army planes had departed the Philippines to make these attacks.\*\* He appears to have awaited their reports with confidence and had great hopes for success.

Sometime around 1923\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet knew that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was preparing to launch a general air offensive\*\*\*\*

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 11th Reconnaissance Unit, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161442.
  - \*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October, 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104; also, Material for Situation Estimates First Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm).
  - \*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 131923, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 47), War Diary Kanoya Detachment 701st Air Group, 13th-31st October 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.
  - \*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



originating from Kyushu against TF 38 on the following day, October 14th and that the attacking planes were to include those planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR which had been transferred to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. Whether he knew this because he had directed that officer to commence such a general air offensive or whether he knew it because he had been so advised by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force is not known.

It was at this point that CinC, Combined Fleet should have taken action to ensure that this general air offensive was in fact a general air offensive. For, in addition to the SIXTH Base Air Force and Army planes on Kyushu, there were many Army and Navy planes on Formosa and in the Philippines which might well have been committed at the same time in a coordinated attack. However, as has been pointed out in Chapter I under "Air Coordination Between Army and Land-Based Naval Air Forces" the existing agreements did not provide a means for coordinating the air forces on Formosa with those in the Philippines. Therefore, does it not seem as if such coordination should properly have been made effective by CinC, Combined Fleet who was the immediate superior in command to both Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and Commander SIXTH Base Air Force?

In this connection it can be stressed here that it is the function of a commander to whom an objective has been assigned to apportion his available resources in such manner as to provide the requisite strength at points likely to be decisive without unduly weakening other points. CinC, Combined Fleet had decided when the SHO One and SHO Two for the base air forces had been activated that action against TF 38 was to be decisive, and he appears to have decided that October 14th in particular was to be the decisive day. Why then did he permit limited forces to be engaged when he had far greater forces which might well have been committed in a powerful coordinated attack without unduly weakening other areas?

Upon the landing of the "T" Force planes on Formosa CinC, Combined Fleet learned, in part directly and in part from Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, that the "T" Force claimed results as follows:

(a) One attack between 1827 and 1907 against a two carrier task group in Latitude 22°-25'N, Longitude 123°-05'E. This was TG 38.4, which consisted of four carriers. The Japanese claimed sinking one ESSEX-class carrier,\* one cruiser and probably sinking one battleship.\*\* Actually no hits were made, but the FRANKLIN received superficial damage from an enemy

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\* 501st Attack Unit (752nd Air Group) Detailed Action Report No. 3, Dusk (Night) Attack on Enemy Task Force East of Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161442.

\*\* 703rd Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 2, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161445.



plane which slid along the deck.

(b) One attack between 1833 and 1905 against a four carrier task group in Latitude 22°-45'N, Longitude 123°-25'E, a position about twenty miles north northeast of the first group. This was TG 38.1 which consisted of four carriers. Planes returning from this attack reported two carriers afire at 1833, that at 1845 one ship, apparently a carrier, blew up and that at 1850 a large carrier blew up.\* Actually while this attack was more successful than was the attack on TG 38.4, no carriers were hit. One hit was made, however, on the heavy cruiser CANBERRA at 1835.

Commander "T" Force reported losing twenty planes in the attack.\*\* As TF 38 claimed thirteen by anti-aircraft fire and four by CAP, it is probable that the remaining three planes were lost at sea due to battle damage or for other causes.

The above indicated that it was possible that three more carriers, one battleship and one cruiser had been sunk and two carriers damaged. This was a hitting percentage of about sixteen percent. In view of previous unsuccessful attacks of this nature, and, particularly in view of those off the Marianas in June, CinC, Combined Fleet must have felt that this was a very high percentage for a forty-three dusk attack made against a heavily defended maneuvering carrier force and should be viewed with caution. This was especially so since the Naval General Staff had not accepted earlier the claims of his "T" Force Commander but had markedly reduced them.

At about 2220 he knew that his "T" Force was planning an attack, for the following day, on what remained of TF 38, for he received a dispatch wherein Commander "T" Force ordered "its entire remaining strength in Kyushu to attack and destroy the enemy 'remnants' by a dusk (night) attack, tomorrow October 14th."\*\*\*

Meanwhile, he most likely received word that the 170 plane attack from the Philippines had failed to discover the enemy because of bad weather and had returned to base. There was a weak to moderate cold front which passed over Formosa from northwest to southeast during the

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\* 708th Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 9, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* 708th Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 9, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 14th, (Commander "T" Attack Force DesOpOrd 21), WDC Document 160579, NA 12296.



afternoon which obscured Formosa for several hours during its passage. It seems reasonable to assume that it was this cold front which turned back the Japanese planes.

CinC, Combined Fleet, if he accepted for planning purposes the claims of his "T" Force for the recently completed night attack, could now estimate that:

(a) At the best he had succeeded in sinking four ships (carriers) on the 12th, out of ten ships hit, and five ships (three carriers, one battleship and one cruiser) out of seven ships hit on the 13th - a total of seventeen ships hit, nine sunk of which seven were carriers.

(b) At the worst, if he accepted the Naval General Staff estimate for the 12th, he had succeeded in sinking two ships (carriers) out of four ships hit on that date and five ships (three carriers, one battleship, and one cruiser out of seven ships hit on the 13th) - a total of eleven ships hit, seven sunk, of which five were carriers.

What CinC, Combined Fleet finally assumed as the correct estimate of damage to TF 38 for October 12th is not known, but it can be assumed that it was within the limits of the above. It must have been with considerable interest then that he received about midnight his Chief of Staff's estimate from his Hiyoshi headquarters. This dispatch, which was supposed to express the opinion of the Naval General Staff, stated:

"The "T" Force on the night of October 12th, carried out a fierce long-range attack on the enemy task force, sinking or setting afire a total of more than six ships. This achievement, at the very beginning of the SHO battle for the base air forces, points the way to the destruction of the enemy.\*\*"

Whether CinC, Combined Fleet accepted these figures is also not known, but since they were a considerable increase over the Naval General Staff estimate as of 0900, viz. two ships sunk two received moderate damage, it is not improbable that he accepted his Chief of Staff's estimate as the basis for future action.

He now could estimate that as of 2400, October 13th his air forces had succeeded in sinking or seriously damaging thirteen enemy ships, and that most of these ships were carriers.

Sometime on this day he learned that the I-26 had departed Kure for sea.\*\*

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\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 132333, October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, etc., WDC Document 161005.

\*\* Submarine Operations 1944, Merit Rating Reports for Naval Ship Units, WDC Document 161011.

(b) Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 13th.

During the morning of October 13th, Commander Mobile Force took no important action except to expedite the transfer of CARDIV THREE's Air Group to designated shore bases.

At about 0345 he received Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's dispatch to the SIXTH Base Air force wherein that commander directed all air units of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR to prepare immediately to move to Formosa for the purpose of carrying out sustained attacks against the enemy carrier force.\* This must have been a considerable surprise to him for he stated later that it was not his "intention to send reinforcements to Formosa."\*\* It now became necessary for him to prepare plans for the employment of his forces and of his Main Force in particular, should SHO One or Two be activated. This was of critical importance because of the loss of his carrier planes which were to have been the backbone of the Main Force.

At 1203 he directed the Commander SECOND Striking Force to direct two destroyers to proceed immediately to Oita Bay to cooperate in the shore basing of the 653rd Air Group which at this time was at Oita, while its parent carriers were in the Kure-Yashima area.\*\*\*

At about 1400 he received a dispatch from COMCARDIV FOUR wherein that commander stated that for the purpose of expediting the transfer of the 634th Air Group to Formosa or of expediting its transfer back to CARDIV FOUR, should that condition eventuate, he considered it necessary that the destroyer SHIMOTSUKI, following her arrival at Kagoshima Bay, be retained there.\*\*\*\*

This dispatch by COMCARDIV FOUR is exceedingly interesting in that it shows that that Commander envisaged the great possibility - and even the great probability - that SHO One would be activated before his planes, which had been ordered to Formosa, could be transferred there. It is clear that in such case he expected the prompt return of his carrier planes to CARDIV FOUR.

Why he retained this thought even though his planes had already been ordered to Formosa, and even though his CinC, Combined Fleet had

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 130314, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 55 Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, IJN, Vol. I, page 220.

\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 131203, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\*\* COMCARDIV 4 Dispatch 131332, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force WDC Document 161638.



apparently discarded the idea of an early activation of SHO One, is not explained. However, it would seem as if COMCARDIV FOUR's appraisal of the developing situation and of the ultimate objectives of the Allied commanders, were at variance with those of CinC, Combined Fleet as well as with those of the Naval General Staff, and were more in line with the basic objectives of the SHO plans.

That Commander Mobile Force concurred with this view of his COMCARDIV FOUR seems clear for the SHIMOTSUKI was retained at Kagoshima as requested.\*

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force,  
October 13th.

The FIRST Striking Force remained in the Lingga-Singapore area and continued its training as discussed under October 10th.

Commander FIRST Striking Force knew that for the present, action against the Allied carrier force was to be by base air forces alone and had observed the orders transferring the planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR to the SIXTH Base Air Force, thence to south Kyushu and finally to Formosa. He therefore continued to maintain a close watch on the developing situation as discussed under October 11th.

(2) Operations of Commander Main Force, October 13th.

Commander Main Force during October 13th took no important action.

At about 0345 he received Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's dispatch to the SIXTH Base Air Force wherein that commander directed all of the units of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR to prepare immediately to move to Formosa for combat operations against the enemy carrier force.\*\*

At about 1400 he received a dispatch from COMCARDIV FOUR, directed to Commander Mobile Force, wherein that commander desired to retain the destroyer SHIMOTSUKI at Kagoshima Bay following her arrival there because he might require it to assist in the movement of the 634th Air Group to Formosa or back to the carriers.\*\*\*

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\* War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 130314, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\* COMCARDIV 4 Dispatch 131332, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, WDC Document 161638.



(3) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force,  
October 13th.

Commander SECOND Striking Force took no important action on October 13th except to continue preparing his ships for possible sortie and combat operations.

These ships were, at this time, either at Iwakuni or at Kure. Actually most of them were at Iwakuni, but DESRON ONE was for the large part at Kure.\*

At about 1230 Commander SECOND Striking Force received Commander Mobile Force's dispatch directing him to send immediately two destroyers to Oita Bay to cooperate in the shore basing of the 653rd Air Group.\*\* In accordance with this dispatch, at 1443, he directed COMDESDIV SIXTY-ONE to comply.\*\*\*

(c) Operations of the Base Air Forces, October 13th.

(1) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.

By about 0230 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had probably received complete reports of the damage sustained by his command during the attacks of TF 38 on the 12th and had commenced re-estimating the situation. From these reports he could see that (a) Formosa had been attacked by about 600 aircraft of TF 38, a large proportion of which had been directed against southern Formosa with smaller attacks in the north, (b) the heaviest damage had been received by the installations at Mako in the Pescadores Islands and by the merchant shipping in Takao Harbor,\*\*\*\*(c) lesser damage had been received by other air installations but presumably all of them were able to continue operations, (d) the loss of aircraft had been considerable. In addition to the forty-one planes lost by the "T" Force in its attack, fifty-seven others had been reported destroyed on the ground,\*\*\*\* and three search planes and one attack plane from Shinchiku had been reported missing. This was a total of one hundred two aircraft destroyed or missing and did not include those damaged.

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\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 131203, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force (Commander Mobile Force DesOpOrd 55), Mobile Force War Diary October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 131443, October 1944 to COMDESDIV 61 (Commander SECOND Striking Force DesOpOrd 5), War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



Against these losses he could balance the damage which his command had inflicted on the enemy. This damage, as has been noted earlier, was believed to have been ten ships damaged, of which four, presumably carriers, had sunk. In connection with the above data it seems wise to point out here that it was almost completely erroneous since (a) he had not inflicted any damage whatsoever on TF 38, and (b) as was the case two days before when TF 38 attacked Okinawa, the report of the number of Allied aircraft attacking Formosa was in error. Actually TF 38 had launched 974 sorties against the target area instead of the 600 reported. Fortunately for Commander SIXTH Base Air Force he was not forced to rely on plane sightings alone to determine the strength of the Allied carrier task force. He had other sources which implemented the plane sightings. Among these were (a) actual sighting of the task force by search planes and submarines although the latter had been highly ineffective, (b) radio intelligence, (c) general intelligence. Had he been forced to rely on plane sightings alone he might well have seriously underestimated the enemy strength.

As a result of his estimate Commander SIXTH Base Air Force decided that his attacks were progressing favorably and should be continued in strength that day. He therefore at 0314 ordered all SIXTH Base Air Force units in Kyushu including aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR, but excluding the "T" Force, to prepare immediately to deploy to Formosa and there to carry out sustained attacks against the enemy task force. He also ordered all units to enforce alert conditions at 0500 and to take precautions against damage from attack.\* His reason for omitting the "T" Force from this order was the fact that that force had previously received general orders to attack, had already executed one attack under this general order, and was presumably preparing to carry out further attacks under the same order. His reason for including the aircraft of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR was clear. He felt that he required all of the aircraft he could find and since these planes were in southern Kyushu they might better be employed in Formosa. It is assumed that this decision met with the prior approval of CinC, Combined Fleet for, as noted previously, such employment of the carrier planes might well have far reaching effects on the prosecution of the entire SHO Operations.

At about 0430 he received by dispatch Commander "T" Force's plan for the "T" Force attack for that day. This plan directed the "T" Attack Force in south Kyushu to destroy the remaining enemy carriers which were estimated to be in three or four task groups operating within a 200 mile radius east of Formosa. Planes of the search phase were to depart Kanoya at 1030 to be followed by the attack unit between 1200 and 1300, and by an additional reconnaissance plane at 1330. The attack unit was to be escorted by a fighter unit. The attack was to be made at dusk. All aircraft were directed to land, after the attack, at Takao,

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 130314, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.



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Tainan, Taichu and Shinchiku on Formosa.\* At this time sixty-five "T" Force planes remained in southern Kyushu.\*\*

At 0530 the first day's search was launched from Okinawa. Whether this had been preceded by night search planes, as on previous nights, is not known, nor is there any record of contacts made on TF 38 during the night. The Okinawa search consisted of three two-engine land bombers which were to cover the sector between bearings  $116^{\circ}$ - $158^{\circ}$ (T) to a distance of 450 miles.\*\*\*

Shortly thereafter at about 0600, FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group on Formosa launched two searches: three two-engine land bombers commenced search of the sector  $115^{\circ}$ - $137^{\circ}$ (T) from Tainan to a range of 250 miles, and two carrier type bombers commenced search of the sector  $115^{\circ}$ - $140^{\circ}$ (T) from Taito to a range of 250 miles.\*\*\*\*

At 0620 one plane of the ELEVENTH Reconnaissance Unit took off from Tainan to return to Kanoya where it was scheduled to be a part of the "T" Force Search Unit.\*\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force probably was not informed of this detail, but he was informed of the contacts which this plane made. These contacts were (a) at 0710 an enemy force which included two carriers, two battleships, several cruisers and destroyers in Latitude  $23^{\circ}$ - $10'$ N, Longitude  $122^{\circ}$ - $50'$ E on a westerly course which position was bearing  $070^{\circ}$ (T) 105 miles from Taito and approximately twenty-eight miles bearing  $055^{\circ}$ (T) from the nearest group of TF 38, (b) three minutes later a second group with two carriers and several other ships.\*\*\*\*\*

It will be observed that the Japanese searches provided reasonable coverage of the areas to the east of the Philippines; provided only slight coverage of the areas north of Luzon, east of Formosa and south of Okinawa, and provided no coverage whatsoever of the areas east of the Nansei Shoto and north to south Kyushu. In addition most air searches provided coverage against early morning strikes only. This may have been due in part to the reduced visibility in the areas between Formosa and south Kyushu caused by widely scattered showers and variable conditions. This, however, seems improbable for under the reduced visibility search

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\* Commander "T" Force Dispatch 130400 to "T" Force ("T" Attack Force DesOpOrd 17) WDC Document 161445.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22.

\*\*\* Western Attack Force 2, SigOrd 29, October 12th, 1944, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\*\* Merit Report, 14th Combined Air Group, Taiwan Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.

\*\*\*\*\* 11th Reconnaissance Unit Detailed Action Report No. 2, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161442.

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conditions existing, the danger of surprise attack by carrier task forces naturally became greater and therefore the Japanese should have increased the density of their searches rather than have cancelled them.

The fact that they did not do so points out again the probability that they had decided at this time that it was the enemy's intention to remain in the waters east of Formosa and not to divide his forces and make strikes elsewhere. While this was a correct evaluation, it was not sound since as has been pointed out previously, the Allies had the capability of striking the Nansei Shoto again and perhaps to strike south Kyushu. Might this not have been a logical result of Japanese successes against TF 38 and thus have afforded some protection to the damaged ships reportedly in the area since these attacks would have reduced the flow of aircraft from the Empire to Formosa and the Philippines, and might even have reversed that flow?

At about 0730 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force commenced receiving reports of attacks on Formosa by TF 38 aircraft. The SECOND Takao Air Group reported that its base had been attacked by forty fighters and bombers; Tainan Air Group reported that about sixty carrier bombers had attacked between 0727 and 0955 but had been driven off with five shot down. Similar reports arrived from other bases.\* It was now apparent to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that, despite the damage which his air units reported having inflicted on the enemy task force, that force was still capable of making strong air strikes. He probably expected this since Imperial General Headquarters' original estimate of the enemy carrier strength had been sixteen to eighteen carriers\*\* and now, if his pilots had actually sunk four of these and damaged others, there would necessarily still be a minimum of twelve carriers remaining with their attached aircraft, which forecast continued strong air strikes. Since the reported strength of these air strikes was no greater than he had expected he correctly decided that his original orders issued at 0314 to all SIXTH Base Air Force units in Kyushu, including units of CARDIV THREE and FOUR, to destroy the remaining units of TF 38 were still sound. However, he planned to reinforce these units with units (FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla) of the SEVENTH Base Air Force which were en route to Kanoya. In addition he expected to receive some cooperation from the FIFTH Base Air Force and the FOURTH Air Army in the Philippines, although how much cooperation he expected to receive is not known.

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\* Merit Report, 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.

\*\* Imperial General Headquarters, THIRD Section Dispatch 111255, October 1944 to All Fleet Commanders, WDC Document 161005.



At about 0900 he was informed that Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla had arrived at Kanoya and had set up his headquarters at that base.\* He could now assume that that commander was moving his air units into position to attack as soon as possible.

At about 0930 he appears to have been informed by his Kanoya headquarters that his Senior Staff Officer at that headquarters had been advised by telephone that the Naval General Staff in Tokyo had estimated the damage inflicted in the "T" Force attack of the previous night as "two ships sunk, two received medium damage.\*\* What effect this reduced estimate had on his mental processes is not known. Perhaps it had a sobering effect as it indicated serious exaggeration by his pilots; perhaps he rejected it in favor of the reports of his pilots. In either case he had no choice. He was determined to continue his operations to destroy the enemy task force, and continued making plans to employ the substantial reinforcements which were being made available to him by CinC, Combined Fleet to accomplish this task.

At 1040 the single plane of the ELEVENTH Reconnaissance Unit, which had sighted two enemy groups with carriers earlier in the day reported a task group of two carriers, two battleships, and two destroyers. This plane had returned to Taito after the first two sightings, and had taken off again at 1015. The position of this latest contact was about twenty-five miles south of the 0710 contact and was about eighteen miles east of the nearest group of TF 38. Whether this contact was believed to be a third carrier task group, or whether it was believed to be a second sighting on one of the earlier contacts reported, is not known. At 1045 the plane discontinued search and proceeded to Okinawa.\*\*\*

It is of interest that this plane returned to base after both the morning and afternoon reconnaissance missions without having been relieved and without being forced to do so by a shortage of gasoline, at least in the afternoon mission. This was not in accordance with Japanese instructions which stated:

"When a scout plane spots the enemy it will determine the enemy strength, make a report covering composition, weather, location, formation, course and speed, and any additional enemy forces discovered and will continue scouting along the prearranged scouting line in an

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\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 130830, October, 1944 to Commander SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces, WDC Document 160258.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* 11th Reconnaissance Unit Detailed Action Report No. 2, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161442.



endeavor to perceive the over-all enemy situation. If the airplane has sufficient endurance it will continue to track the enemy on the line of return.\*\*

At 1045 the search unit of the "T" Force Attack Group took off from Kanoya. This unit consisted of four planes: three carrier type reconnaissance planes of ELEVENTH Reconnaissance Unit and one two-engine land bomber of 708th Attack Unit. It was ordered to proceed to Okinawa and then to search sector 215°-242° (T) to a distance of 390 miles from Okinawa. On completion of its mission the planes were to land on Formosa.\*\*

At 1145 one carrier type reconnaissance plane of TWELFTH Reconnaissance Unit departed Kanoya. Neither the area searched nor the orders under which it operated are known. It landed on Formosa at 1730 having made no contacts.\*\*\*

Two of the 1045 "T" Force search planes returned to base due to mechanical difficulties and were replaced, one at 1245 and one at 1305.\*\*

This return to base of two of his four search planes must have been somewhat discouraging to Commander "T" Force for it tended to diminish the effectiveness of the planned search. Although replacement planes were dispatched, the other two search planes had already been on search for two hours making it difficult to ensure that the area had been adequately searched even though the original search was twice as dense as necessary.

At about this time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received a dispatch, originated by his Senior Staff Officer at Kanoya, which directed SIXTH Base Air Force units in Kyushu to cooperate in providing logistic support for air units of the FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla and of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR which would move into south Kyushu bases during the afternoon.\*\*\*\* From this dispatch he learned that (a) Commander SEVENTH Base Air Force was transferring to Kyushu, under Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla, 120 fighters, fifty carrier type attack planes, fifty carrier type bombers and thirty carrier type reconnaissance planes - a total of

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\* Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 86, August 4th, 1944, Air Combat Regulations for SHO Operations, ATIS Document 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1944 (NACHI Document).

\*\* 708th Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 9, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\* War Diary 12th Reconnaissance Unit, Kanoya Detachment, October 12th-15th, 1944, WDC Document 160381.

\*\*\*\* Senior Staff Officer, SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch unnumbered contained in War Diary Kokubu Detachment 103rd Attack Unit, 701st Air Group, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160258.



250 planes - and (b) instead of the 154 planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR which were also moving into position in south Kyushu he was to receive 172 planes - a welcome addition of some eighteen planes. This gave him a total of 422 additional operational aircraft of all types which would shortly be ready to join the attack from the north.

At about 1306 he received a dispatch from the Chief of the Naval General Staff to Commanders "T" Force and 901st Air Group stating "This morning on reporting on the situation to the Throne the Emperor expressed extreme satisfaction with the results obtained the previous night October 12th."\*

Between 1300 and 1410 the "T" Force Attack Group consisting of thirty-three aircraft, took off from south Kyushu bases to strike the enemy task force at dusk. This group included aircraft from three attack units: 501st Attack Unit - Six two-engine land bombers.\*\* 703rd Attack Unit - Eight land attack planes.\*\*\* 708th Attack Unit - Nineteen land attack planes.\*\*\*\* Seven of these planes were direct cooperation planes (pathfinders and control aircraft) carrying flares, twenty-three were armed with torpedoes, and three carried bombs. One of the direct cooperation planes and four of the others returned to base after take-off due to engine trouble. The remaining twenty-eight headed for Miyako Jima, their rendezvous point. The composition was now the 501st Attack Unit with four planes armed with bombs or torpedoes, the 703rd Attack Unit with eight planes with one torpedo each, and the 708th Attack Unit with sixteen planes, ten of which were armed with torpedoes, the remaining six, with flares.

This "T" Force attack group was escorted by a fighter unit of about ten fighters of the 303rd Fighter Unit.\*\*\*\*\* Thus, the "T" Force attack, as launched, consisted of forty-three aircraft of which thirty-eight proceeded to the target area.

It will be observed that although this attack group was only about one-third the size of the group which had attacked the previous night, and was composed of those "T" Force planes remaining in Kyushu, it represented the maximum force which was ready to attack. The large number of

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\* Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group Night Searches, October 10th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551 NA 12402.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, 501st Attack Unit (752nd Air Group), October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161442.

\*\*\* 703rd Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 2, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161445.

\*\*\*\* 708th Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 9, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



reinforcements referred to previously would not be ready until the following day. Presumably Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew the composition of the "T" Force attack group.

At 1330 the 708th Attack Unit launched a single land attack plane to conduct a search on course 215° from Kiyamusaki, Okinawa to a distance of 425 miles.\* This plane was the additional reconnaissance flight directed by Commander "T" Force in his attack plan.\*\*

It seems probable that at about this same time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew that, unlike the previous day, he would be assisted by Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and CG FOURTH Air Army in the Philippines in destroying the enemy task force since these latter commanders had, at 1315, launched a combined force of 170 aircraft from the Clark Field area to attack TF 38.\*\*\* How this attack was to be coordinated with the "T" Force attack is not indicated.

At about 1400 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received from his Senior Staff Officer at Kanoya a proposed deployment of the FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla and CARDIV's THREE and FOUR units to Formosa.\*\*\*\* About an hour later he received, also from his Senior Staff Officer at Kanoya, a proposed organization for these newly arrived units.\*\*\*\*\* He took no action on these proposals at this time.

By mid-afternoon the existing air situation was about as follows: (a) no further contacts had been reported since 1040 and all regular search planes had presumably returned to their bases or at least, as in the case of the one plane of the TWELFTH Reconnaissance Unit from Kanoya, had departed the area of probable contact, (b) the "T" Force search unit was still actively searching and (c) the "T" Force attack group of twenty-eight attack planes escorted by the ten fighter planes, and the attack group from the Philippines of 170 aircraft were proceeding to the objective area.

While Commander SIXTH Base Air Force awaited further contacts he received additional reports of damage inflicted by the attacking enemy

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\* 708th Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 9, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Commander "T" Force Dispatch 130400, October 1944 to "T" Force, WDC Document 161445.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\* Senior Staff Officer, SIXTH Base Air Force at Kanoya Dispatch 131330, October 1944, to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160258.

\*\*\*\*\* Ibid Dispatch 131450, October 1944.



aircraft on Formosa. The Tainan Air Group reported that between 1435 and 1535 thirteen enemy planes had attacked, but had been driven off. The SECOND Takao Air Group reported that between 1400 and 1600 eighty enemy fighters and bombers had attacked but had been driven off.\* The damage sustained was reported as light.\*\*

In addition to these reports Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was informed that, in addition to the arrival of reinforcing units at bases in south Kyushu during the afternoon, elements of the two fighter groups ordered to deploy to Formosa from the China Area Fleet had commenced arriving. Sixteen fighters of 254th Air Group\*\*\* and two fighters of 256th Air Group\*\*\*\* had arrived at Tainan where they had reported to Commander Formosa Air Group, a subordinate of Commander FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group.

At 1620 the first contact by the "T" Force search was made. A pilot of the ELEVENTH Reconnaissance Unit reported sighting three enemy carriers in Latitude 22°-50'N, Longitude 122°-50'E. Four minutes later at 1624 he reported a second force of four carriers, two battleships, and other ships in Latitude 22°-50'N, Longitude 122°-30'E, and at 1720 he reported that the enemy strength was disposed in three groups. Thereafter he maintained contact.\*\*\*\*\* Also at 1720 a search plane pilot of the 708th Attack Unit reported sighting an enemy surface force at Latitude 23°-05'N, Longitude 123°-35'E. At 1730 he reported the composition of this force as one carrier and one cruiser on course 000° speed eight knots.\*\*\*\*\*

The 1620 and 1640 positions reported above were within five to ten miles of the actual position of TF 38; the 1720 position was about forty miles east of TF 38.

These contacts, which were transmitted by the search planes to the attack group, were received\*\*\*\*\* by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force who was at his headquarters at Takao awaiting information on the progress of the attack. They should have been very gratifying since they revealed

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- \* Merit Report, 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.
  - \*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\*\* Detailed Action Report of Formosa Detachment, 254th Air Group, 13th-27th October 1944, WDC Document 161429.
  - \*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report of Expeditionary Fighter Unit, 256th Air Group, October 13th-November 17th, 1944, WDC Document 161422.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 11th Reconnaissance Unit, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161442.
  - \*\*\*\*\* 708th Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 9, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 4, 51st Air Flotilla, October 10th-November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645 NA 12262.



that (a) the sightings had been made in ample time for the attack group to make a coordinated dusk attack and (b) there were many appropriate targets. Sunset was at 1826 and the end of evening twilight at 1940.

The three attack units of the "T" Force Attack Group, which had proceeded separately to Miyako, also arrived there separately. The first to arrive were the sixteen planes of the 708th Attack Unit which had arrived at 1538 and had commenced orbiting there awaiting dusk.\* On receiving the 1620 contact this attack unit departed without waiting for the other two attack units, and proceeded toward the contact which was about 170 miles away. The second to arrive were the eight planes of the 703rd Attack Unit which passed Miyako Jima at 1640 and continued on without delay toward the enemy's position.\*\* The last to arrive were the four planes of the 501st Attack Unit which passed Miyako Jima at about 1655. It will be noted that no reference is made here to the ten fighter planes escorting the attack units of the "T" Force. This is because there is no further mention of them in the records available to this study. It seems probable that these planes returned to base without engaging the enemy fighters since there is no record by the Allies of having observed fighters during the attacks made by the three attack units. Between 1827 and 1907 these three attack units conducted continuous attack on TG's 38.1 and 38.4. The data available is very indefinite so that it is difficult to discern which attack unit accomplished the actual damage to the above two task groups. However, it seems that the following analysis is reasonably correct.

Each of the above three attack groups operated independently. Sometime after 1827 the 708th Attack Unit contacted TG's 38.1 and 38.4 and, guided by the direct cooperation planes, immediately commenced its attack with the first plane making a torpedo attack on an enemy ship in TG 38.1 believed to be a heavy cruiser. At the same time two planes of this attack unit launched an attack on TG 38.4 which was next in formation to the south. The planes of this unit continued their attacks until 1905 when the last plane made a torpedo attack on an enemy carrier and then retired. They reported seeing two carriers on fire at 1833, one ship apparently a carrier blow up at 1845, and a large carrier blow up at 1850.\* Actually these claims were seriously in error since the whole damage inflicted was (a) slight damage to the FRANKLIN at 1831 caused by a plane which had been shot down by AA fire sliding across the

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\* 708th Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 9, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* 703rd Attack Unit Detailed Action Report No. 2, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161445.



deck,\* and (b) a torpedo hit on the CANBERRA at 1835.\*\* In accomplishing this result the attack unit lost eight of the ten attack planes and three of the six direct cooperation planes. CTG 38.1 reported that he had shot down six planes in this attack and CTG 38.4 reported that he had shot down both planes which had attacked this group at this time for a total of eight, thus exactly confirming the Japanese attack plane losses.

During this same time the aircraft of the 703rd and the 501st Attack Units, which were arriving in the area, were attacked by eight VF from the ENTERPRISE in TG 38.4. These fighters shot down three land attack and one two-engine land bomber aircraft before those attack units could launch their attack.\*\*\* This reduced the attack strength of the 703rd Attack Unit to five and of the 501st Attack Unit to three planes.

At 1855, the 703rd Attack Unit commenced its torpedo attack on TG 38.4. Of the five planes which had commenced the attack, only three survived to report the results. One pilot reported that he had launched his torpedo at 1855 at a battleship, had observed a pillar of fire, and therefore felt that it was highly probable that the ship had been sunk; the second pilot reported having scored a torpedo hit at 1900 on a cruiser which had sunk; the third pilot reported that he had made two runs, but had been unable to release his torpedo. He had therefore returned to base with it.\*\*\*\*

At 1910 the last attack unit, the 501st Attack Unit, commenced a torpedo attack against TG 38.4. Two of the three planes which had commenced the attack failed to return to base. The pilot of the surviving plane reported that he had hit an ESSEX-Class carrier with one bomb which had set the ship afire, as a result of which the ship broke in two and sank.\*\*\*\*\* Actually these claims were completely in error as no damage was inflicted by this attack of the 703rd and the 501st Attack Units. In this attack on TG 38.4 each attack unit lost two planes for a total of four. This confirmed CTG 38.4's report that he had shot down three planes at this time by AA fire, and a fourth by a combination of AA fire and gunfire of an ENTERPRISE fighter.

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\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 13th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CANBERRA, 1835, October 13th-17th, 1944, Serial 078, October 27th, 1944, Enclosure A, Page 1.

\*\*\* Action Report ENTERPRISE, Operations Against Nansai Shoto, Formosa Philippine Islands, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0053, October 31st, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 703rd Attack Unit, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161445.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 3, 501st Attack Unit (752nd Air Group) Night Dusk Attack on Enemy Task Force East of Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161442.



Thus, the total damage on TF 38 claimed by the pilots was:

(a) Sunk - three carriers, one cruiser, one battleship probably sunk.

(b) Damaged - two carriers on fire, another cruiser attacked but results unobserved.

On the other hand losses sustained by the "T" Force were - sixteen out of twenty-two attack planes, three out of six direct cooperation planes, and one out of five search planes, missing, for a total loss of twenty planes. This was roughly sixty percent of the thirty-three "T" Force planes engaged in the attack operations.

This "T" Force attack was commenced at about sunset and completed well before the end of evening twilight. Although the number of planes involved was relatively small the attack was carried out by the three independent attack units over an unusually long period of time - about forty-five minutes. In this connection it is of interest that the ten planes of the 708th Attack Unit took thirty-two minutes between the time the first plane dropped its torpedo and the last plane completed its attack.\* There appears to have been no over-all attack commander and no coordination. This was at variance with the basic instructions issued for the SHO Operations which directed that "once the enemy is sighted, the airplanes will attack simultaneously.\*\* These same instructions also directed that attack units would depart the rendezvous point (in this attack the rendezvous point was Miyako Jima) together and "complete the closing of the formation on the way to the attack.\*\*\*

Why the attack was not made in accordance with the sound instructions of CinC, Combined Fleet is not known. While the weather existing in the area (there were rain squalls present) may have increased the difficulty of making a well timed, concentrated attack, it is obvious that there were no plans for such an attack. As a result, in part, of this lack of concentration, the attack group actually lost twenty planes to the combined anti-aircraft fire of TF 38 and the fighter CAP, although CTF 38 thought that he had destroyed seventeen.

It seems probable that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received flash radio reports from the surviving aircraft soon after 1900. However, it was after 2000 before he was able to receive interrogation

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 9, 708th Attack Unit, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Combined Fleet Operations Order No. 86, Air Combat Regulations for SHO Operations, Paragraph II C2b, ATIS Document No. 39, Part VIII, June 4th, 1944 (NACHI Document).

\*\*\* Ibid, Paragraph II C2a.



reports from the attack pilots themselves since the first attack plane to return landed at Takao at that time.\*

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force now re-estimated the situation. He had reason to believe that the "T" Force had inflicted substantial damage on TF 38 in its dusk attack of the preceding day; he had hopes that the "T" Force attacks now underway were being equally effective, but since the "T" Force attack unit was much smaller than the unit which had attacked on the previous day (43 vs 101) he could not expect great results; he knew that TF 38 despite the attacks of October 12th was still very powerful for he had not only observed that day's attacks on Formosa, but he had learned that Formosa had been struck by a total of 600 planes - exactly the same number that had attacked on the 12th - he therefore realized that additional attacks in strength were necessary if he was to destroy the combat ability of TF 38.

He examined his own air resources available. He knew, as has been pointed out earlier, that he would have on the morrow (October 14th) in south Kyushu 250 planes from the SEVENTH Base Air Force and 172 planes from CARDIV's THREE and FOUR - a total of 422 planes, additional to a small number of "T" Force planes remaining there. He decided to launch all of these planes in a general attack on TF 38 and immediately at 1923 issued orders to make the decision effective, which orders directed:

"1. The SIXTH Base Air Force will destroy the enemy task force east of Formosa today and tomorrow.

"2. The "T" Force will operate as previously directed (the "T" Force was to make a dusk attack as on October 12th and 13th).

"3. The FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla and the planes of CARDIV's THREE and FOUR, all under the unified command of the senior group commander, will depart early tomorrow, will stage at Okinawa and will attack TF 38 at about 1600 after which they will land at Formosa at about 1700.\*\*

This decision of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was sound, but it was not complete in that (a) it did not provide for a coordinated attack with the SIXTH Base Air Force planes which included Army planes, now in Formosa, and (b) it did not, in addition, provide for coordination with the attacks to be launched from the Philippines by Commander FIFTH Base

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 2, 703rd Attack Unit, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 13th, 1944, WDC Document 161445.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 131923, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, War Diary Kanoya Detachment, October 13th-31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258, NA 12592.



Air Force and by CG FOURTH Air Army. This indicates that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had either not thought of such coordination, or had unsuccessfully requested such coordination thru CinC, Combined Fleet. There is nothing in the record to indicate the latter.

As noted, the first "T" Force attack plane landed at Takao at 2000 and shortly thereafter Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned the detailed claims of the pilots involved in the attack. How much credence he put in them is not known. They must have appeared extremely optimistic to him. Even though he had had no previous experience directing land-based aircraft in combat and had no properly organized intelligence staff with him on Formosa, he was aware of the lack of success Japanese air units had experienced in previous attacks against the Allied carrier force particularly on the Marianas in June 1944. In addition, it is not improbable that he knew that the Navy General Staff had reduced the "T" Force claims of the previous night from four ships, presumably carriers, sunk and six others set afire, to two ships sunk and two receiving medium damage. Whether or not he now applied a similar factor to the latest "T" Force claims is not known, but even if he did so the attack would have appeared to have been very successful and would have indicated a further reduction in the carrier strength of TF 38.

At about this same time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force probably learned from Commander FOURTEENTH Combined Air Group that Army heavy bombers were landing at Tainan for refueling.\* These were a part of the 170 plane attack group which had departed from the Philippines at 1315. This group had encountered bad weather and had not attacked.\*\* Most of the planes returned to Philippines bases; a few were landing on Formosa.

At about 2100 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received a dispatch from Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla wherein that commander indicated bases on Formosa which would be used by aircraft units after the general attack on the following day and also requested that these bases be prepared to service these aircraft so that further attacks could be made.\*\*\*

At about 2130, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla's plan for the general offensive.\*\*\*\* This

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\* Merit Report 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 132032, October 1944 to Commander 21st Air Flotilla and Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160258.

\*\*\*\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 132058, October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160258.



plan indicated that some 444 aircraft would be involved in the attack departing from Kyushu at 0600, staging through Okinawa, and landing on Formosa after the attack.

At about 2220 he also received Commander "T" Force's plan for another dusk attack on the 14th.\* This plan stated that the entire remaining strength of the "T" Force on Kyushu would stand by after 0800 the following morning to destroy the remnants of the enemy task force.

Throughout the remainder of the evening, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, having already issued his orders for operations on the next day, considered further the conflicting reports of damage already inflicted. It is very possible that he consulted with CinC, Combined Fleet on this subject. At about midnight he received a further evaluation of the first "T" Force attack of the previous night in which the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet now estimated that more than six ships had been sunk or set afire.\*\* This was considerably more than the Naval General Staff had evaluated that morning and could be stretched to match the original pilots' reports. What Commander SIXTH Base Air Force actually believed had been accomplished is not known but it seems probable that, since the attacks so far had been conducted by his specially trained and experienced "T" Force, he had considerable faith in his pilots' reports and believed that he was inflicting very serious damage on TF 38.

(2) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force,  
October 13th.

As on the previous day, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force continued to operate in cooperation with CG FOURTH Air Army. As has been noted, he had received an order from his superior, Commander Southwest Area Force, on the previous day to destroy the enemy task force employing his full strength\*\*\* but had been unable to attack because his air units could not be readied.\*\*\*\* Presumably he launched searches on the morning of October 13th. His planes made no contacts for TF 38 was not operating in the area of his searches. It is logical to assume, however, that he was informed of the contacts made by planes of SIXTH Base Air Force and also of the continuing Allied attack on Formosa. The contacts indicated that the enemy was still operating in an area approximately 280 miles north of Aparri.

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\* Commander "T" Force Dispatch 132149, October 1944 ("T" Attack Force DesOpOrd 21), WDC Document 160579.

\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 132333, October 1944 to Commander FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH Base Air Force, etc., WDC Document 161005.

\*\*\* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 121235, to Commanders THIRD and FIFTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160264.

\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



During the morning, while closely observing the situation off Formosa, he completed plans for an attack in cooperation with Army air units of the FOURTH Air Army. At 1315 this combined attack group, totalling 170 aircraft, departed from Clark Field bases to destroy the enemy task force.\* What part of this group were his own aircraft is not known. Thereafter he awaited the results of this attack. Presumably his orders were similar to those of CG FOURTH Air Army which directed the attack planes to land on Formosa, Nansei Shoto or northern Luzon for refueling prior to returning to the Manila Area. If they went on to Formosa or Nansei Shoto there might be a delay before he could learn the scope of their success.

Whether or not Commander FIFTH Base Air Force was informed of the plans for a dusk attack to be executed by the "T" Force is also not known. There is no indication that any action was taken by any commander to coordinate these two attacks. It may have been felt that, since the attack group from the Philippines should reach the attack area some 500 miles from their bases more than an hour before sunset, they would not conflict with the "T" Force dusk attack.

Sometime in the late afternoon or early evening some of the attack planes returned to the Clark Field area and Commander FIFTH Base Air Force learned that they had encountered bad weather and been unable to attack.\* Others of the attack group landed on Formosa.\*\* Thus, for the second day, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force had failed to execute an attack. The remainder of the night was spent in reassembling\* aircraft which had landed at other than normal bases after the abortive attack in order to be ready to attack on the 14th.

(d) Operations of CG FOURTH Air Army, October 13th.

Operations of CG FOURTH Air Army were similar to those of FIFTH Base Air Force. He presumably launched morning short-range patrols and readied his command to attack. At 0945 from his headquarters at Manila he issued orders to his air units - SIXTEENTH and TWENTY-SECOND Air Brigades of the SECOND Air Division - to attack in cooperation with the FIFTH Base Air Force the enemy task force operating east of Formosa,\*\*\* and then to land on Formosa, Nansei Shoto or northern Luzon. After refueling they were to return as soon as possible to their original bases. As noted under FIFTH Base Air Force this combined Army-Navy air attack was launched at 1315 but owing to bad weather failed to locate the enemy. No other action was taken by CG FOURTH Air Army on this day.

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Merit Report 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161C12.

\*\*\* FOURTH Air Army Operations Order A-489, October 13th, 1944, contained in File of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer FOURTH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.



## (5) Operations on October 14th.

## (a) Operations of CinC, Combined Fleet

CinC, Combined Fleet took no important action during the remainder of the night of October 13th-14th. He appears to have been highly satisfied with the performance of his air forces to date, and with the success of his operations. To have hit thirteen ships, mostly carriers, was a vast improvement over the performances of his air force in the Marianas and gave promise of greater future successes as his pilots became battle tested, and as the power of TF 38 necessarily decreased under the successful attacks of his aircraft.

He now awaited reports of his search planes which had departed from Garan Bi, Shinchiku, Okinawa and from Philippine bases. He was interested, of course, in learning what these search planes might discover of the enemy. Had they actually retired? If not, where were the various task groups located and what was the composition of each task group, particularly in carriers?

He knew, of course, that the SIXTH Base Air Force was this day launching a general air offensive from Kyushu against enemy Allied forces discovered; that this offensive was to employ many more planes (probably 450 planes) than had the attacks on previous days; that it was to depart at 0600; was to stage through Okinawa fields; was to attack during the afternoon and then was to land on Formosa at designated air bases. He also knew that the "T" Force was making a dusk attack from Kyushu bases also landing on Formosa.

At about 0715 the first of some 250 Allied carrier planes struck Formosa.\* This was a single strike ordered by CTF 38 to cover the retirement of the cruiser CANBERRA which had been torpedoed by a Japanese air torpedo the previous evening. It is of interest that the Japanese estimate of the number of carrier planes was almost exactly correct since 246 planes had been launched by TF 38. If CinC, Combined Fleet had wondered whether or not his attacks had forced the enemy carriers to withdraw during the night he now knew that they had not withdrawn and that the attacks as planned for that day would find suitable targets. He also knew, since he was present, that Shinchiku Air Base had been heavily hit with damage as follows: barracks half destroyed, all hangars unusable, torpedo maintenance shop damaged although torpedoes could still be properly maintained there. On the other hand his pilots at Shinchiku had shot down fifteen Allied fighters. Since TF 38 had lost but fourteen planes over all Formosa these claims were obviously

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\* Merit Report 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012 NA 12275.



excessive although CinC, Combined Fleet could not know it.\*

He received contact reports as follows:

(a) About 0820 - by a Tainan search plane - contact at 0750 on a carrier task group on course south in Latitude 23°-15'N, Longitude 123°-15' E.\*\*

(b) About 0850 - by a Shinchiku search plane - an unidentified contact.\*\*\*

(c) About 0900 - (1) By a search plane from Tainan - contact at 0840 on a second carrier group on course southeast in Latitude 23°-25'N, Longitude 122°-55'E.\*\* (2) By a RDF fix from Kanoya at 0728 in Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 122°-00'E.\*\*\*\*

Also at about this time CinC, Combined Fleet probably received a report from Commander FIFTH Base Air Force that Aparri in northern Luzon had been hit by approximately twenty-four fighters at 0820. This must have been somewhat of a surprise to him as the contact reports received that morning had indicated a minimum of two carrier task groups off Formosa, and now here, most likely in view of the 0728 RDF fix was a third carrier group. He couldn't be sure as Aparri had, after all, only been hit by fighters which could have come from the carriers off Formosa, but, since the distance was about 300 miles, this was doubtful.

At about 1100 he received a contact report from one of the Shinchiku search planes that at 1055 it had contacted two enemy surface ships in Latitude 19°-56'N, Longitude 122°-58'E.\*\*\*\*\*

Between 1240 and 1430 he received word that a total of about one hundred B-29's from China bases had attacked in the Tainan-Takao area inflicting heavy damage on the airfields and air material depots.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 142113, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 9, 708th Attack Unit Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160579 NA 12296.

\*\*\* Ibid, No. 6

\*\*\*\* Staff Officer 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 140832, October 1944, WDC Document 160258 NA 12592.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit, Searches and Patrols of "F's" Sector, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579, NA 12297.

\*\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



Since this strike had been forecast by intelligence gained on October 4th which intelligence had predicted, (a) that Allied carriers would strike Formosa, (b) that the FOURTEENTH and TWENTIETH Air Forces based in China would participate by striking either Formosa, Okinawa or Kyushu or perhaps all three; and (c) that these strikes were designed to isolate the Philippines, it seems correct to say that CinC, Combined Fleet should have viewed this strike with far more than passing interest. There is nothing available to this study which indicates what consideration he actually gave it. However, the fact that it hit Formosa at the same time as the carrier strikes certainly proved the accuracy of Japanese intelligence, and gave strong indications that the concept that these strikes were designed to isolate the Philippines was most likely true. But why should the Allies endeavor to isolate the Philippines at this time? Does not the answer suggest itself - "to safeguard an amphibious landing," and had not the SHO plan been prepared to prevent such a landing? Therefore, should not the Allied capability of making very shortly an amphibious landing somewhere in the Philippines have been given serious study by CinC, Combined Fleet? But since CinC, Combined Fleet had committed his base air forces to the destruction of TF 38 and had gambled his whole air force, including carrier aircraft on this objective, it seems probable that he did not give the matter the consideration it deserved.

At about 1245 he received a dispatch which his Chief of Staff at Hiyoshi had originated at 1216 wherein that officer directed the Commander SECOND Striking Force with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE to expedite preparations, and when ready, to sortie immediately to the waters east of Formosa and there to take advantage of any favorable opportunity (a) to attack and destroy damaged enemy ships and (b) to rescue Japanese air crews.\*

It will be noted that this order was issued prior to the time that the general air offensive by Kyushu planes planned for later that day could be delivered. This was because his Chief of Staff at Hiyoshi and the Naval General Staff in Tokyo obviously believed (a) that this air strike would be highly effective against TF 38 and therefore, to obtain the maximum results, it would be wise to have a light striking force of surface ships near the objective area - the objective area was roughly 700 miles from Bungo Suido - which striking force would be available to knock off "cripples" during darkness and (b) that TF 38 had been forced to retire. They believed this because, in the air strikes of the 12th and 13th, Formosa had been hit from early morning until early afternoon by as many as 600 carrier planes. Now Formosa had been hit by but one air strike of some 250 planes and since 0930 had not been attacked at all. The inference was obvious. Actually, TF 38

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141216, October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 348) WDC Document 161638.



had not been forced to retire, and in fact at this time was operating in its morning attack position. However, it is true that several hours later at 1135 to be exact, TG's 38.2 and 38.3 commenced retiring to fuel leaving TG 38.1 to cover the damaged CANBERRA. TG 38.4, since 2201 the previous evening, had been heading south to attack northern Luzon.

Why the Naval General Staff estimated that this day's daylight attack would be so effective as to warrant the dispatch of the above light surface force is not clear for as has been indicated previously, Japanese land-based aircraft had heretofore fared badly against Allied carrier task forces, and in most operations previous to KING II had been highly ineffective. That the Japanese were fully cognizant of this is plain for on August 10th the Chief of Staff, Mobile Force in a statement on Mobile Force operations in the SHO Operations had stated, "At first glance, because of our present lack of both material and maintenance equipment, our chances of success in air combat may appear slight when delivering a strong daylight blow against the enemy. However, it should be borne in mind that in mobile sea combat there will be many opportunities which can be used to advantage and when an air attack is to be launched at such an opportunity our entire air strength must be so concentrated and so directed that the enemy will be destroyed in one blow."\*

While this refers to Japanese carrier-based aircraft it seems equally applicable to Japanese land-based aircraft. Perhaps CinC, Combined Fleet's Chief of Staff and the Naval General Staff felt confident that the damage and destruction inflicted on TF 38 on the nights of October 12th and 13th had created the opportunity, and that TF 38 had been so weakened thereby as to be a much easier target than heretofore, although reports already received that day, indicated that there were still two and, possibly three, enemy carrier groups operating off Formosa. Perhaps also the very successful but erroneous results claimed by Shinchiku-based aircraft against Allied aircraft in the day air strikes on Shinchiku Air Base on October 12th, contributed to this feeling of confidence.

What CinC, Combined Fleet thought of this order is nowhere stated. However, since he had advised his Chief of Staff to be guided by the counsel of the Naval General Staff, he could believe that this order met with the approval of that staff. It is doubtful if it met with his own full approval, for, as a senior naval officer of long experience, he must have felt that it was unwise to dispatch a light surface force without adequate air cover to an area where it might be within

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\* Statement of Chief of Staff Mobile Force on Mobile Force Operations in the SHO Operations, Mobile Force Serial 1003, August 10th, 1944.



range of a still powerful enemy carrier force. In this case, of course, some air cover would be provided by the land-based air forces. But land-based air cover was of very doubtful quality since direct communications between land-based air units and surface craft were at this time non-existent. In fact, in commenting in 1945 on the Marianas operations of June 1944, CinC, Combined Fleet stated, "Communications had not been developed to the stage where for instance, a surface unit could intercept or receive messages from land-based aircraft."\* Therefore the quality of air cover to be provided by land-based planes could be expected to be very low indeed. There seems to have been no improvement by the time of KING II.

On the other hand he was quite familiar with the fact that during battle, damaged ships often drift about without any particular support. For example, he most likely knew that at Midway the Japanese had left their damaged carriers behind with two destroyers to each carrier, and with no air cover whatsoever, and had done about the same thing with the heavy cruisers MOGAMI and MIKUMA. He also most likely knew that the Americans at Midway had left the YORKTOWN with but one destroyer as cover.\*\* The YORKTOWN was not provided with air cover, although it is doubtful if the lack of much air cover was known to the Japanese.

In view of this it is probable that he felt that since Commander SECOND Striking Force might find valuable targets to destroy - in fact there were reports that such damaged ships had already been observed\*\*\* - and since the weaknesses of communications were known to the Naval General Staff, this order was in the nature of a calculated risk and if acceptable to Tokyo it was acceptable to him. Certainly he did nothing at this time to indicate his disapproval.

At about 1613 CinC, Combined Fleet received a dispatch from Commander SIXTH Base Air Force advising the command that two days earlier (October 12th) he had placed the SEVENTH Base Air Force units in the Kyushu area under Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla, and had ordered him to command all SIXTH Base Air Force (less "T" Force) units in Kyushu.\*\*\*\*

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\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 75, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Admiral Soemu Toyoda, IJN, Vol II, page 316.

\*\* Mobile Force Detailed Battle Report No. 6, ONI Review, May 1947, page 38.

\*\*\* War Diary COMTHIRDFLT, October 14th, 1944, page 15; also Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141613, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force; War Diary Kanoya Detachment 252nd Attack Unit, October 13th-31st, 1944, WDC Document 160258 NA 12592.



CinC, Combined Fleet did nothing unusual during the late afternoon except to await the results of the attack by the Kyushu-based planes scheduled for late afternoon. This attack was made in three attack waves, with general attack forces in the first two waves, and the "T" Force, including Army heavy bomber units in the third wave. Sometime before 1808 he evidently received the first reports from the first attack wave wherein the pilots claimed having damaged four carriers between 1510 and 1530. This attack wave had attacked TG 38.2 as a principal target. CTG 38.2 reported that, except for a light bomb hit at 1523 on the HANCOCK, which did but slight damage, the attack had failed. TG 38.3 was also attacked but except for a single plane which dropped a bomb near the LEXINGTON nothing was accomplished.\*

The pilots also undoubtedly reported that the task group attacked was on a southeasterly course, and gave a position much to the eastward of the forenoon contacts.

It is possible that CinC, Combined Fleet received three additional contact reports, one, at about 1620 concerning a contact at 1300 on the enemy task force but apparently giving no location or composition; one at 1700, reporting a 1630 contact on an enemy task group consisting of ten ships including carriers, battleships and destroyers, but once again giving no location; and one, at 1720 reporting a 1650 contact on a second task group consisting of one large carrier, one escort carrier, one battleship and several destroyers with no location stated. Although it is probable that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew roughly the probable locations, since he should have known the areas being searched and the number of the planes in the various search lanes, it is not known whether or not he made this information available to CinC, Combined Fleet.

That CinC, Combined Fleet now decided that his Chief of Staff and the Naval General Staff were correct in their opinion that he had succeeded in defeating the enemy seems clear, for at 1808 he initiated a special dispatch to the Combined Fleet wherein he stated:

(a) The enemy task force, as a result of our attacks, is retiring in defeat.

(b) The Base Air Forces and the SECOND Striking Force will destroy the remaining enemy with all forces at their command.\*\*

It is possible that prior to issuing this message CinC, Combined Fleet found occasion to regret the fact that he had transferred his

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\* War Diary LEXINGTON, October 14th, 1944.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141808, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH and SEVENTH Air Fleets and Commander SECOND Striking Force, (CinC, Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd 8) WDC Document 161005.



carrier air groups to the SIXTH Base Air Force. For it was obvious that the SECOND Striking Force was, by the very nature of the situation, restricted to a very secondary role. It was also obvious that what was now required to complete the annihilation of the enemy was carrier-based aircraft and this was no longer available.

At about 1902 he learned, in addition, that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had ordered the "T" Force and SIXTH Base Air Force units remaining in Kyushu and the SIXTH Base Air Force units on Formosa\* to carry out present attack operations against TF 38 on the following day, October 15th.\*\*

At about 2035 he received an astonishing dispatch from his Chief of Staff wherein that officer advised all flag officers that the results of the "T" Force attacks on the nights of October 12th and 13th had been evaluated as:

(a) October 12th - Six to eight carriers sunk including three to four large carriers.

(b) October 13th - Three to five carriers sunk including two to three large carriers.

He advised further that, in addition to the above, other ships had been sunk or damaged, and that (today) October 14th, these attacks by the base air forces were being pressed both day and night.\*\*\*

What CinC, Combined Fleet thought of this evaluation is nowhere stated in precise language. However, that he thought it considerably exaggerated seems very evident for not only were these claims in excess of anything that he had heard, even directly from the pilots, but, based on past performances, such a high degree of success was highly improbable. It inferred that nearly every carrier of TF 38 had been sunk or damaged. In this connection he stated later, "I did not blindly accept the reports of forces on the spot with regard to the results achieved in air operations. Both at that time, and subsequently, I sought to arrive at as accurate an estimate as possible on the basis of various information. I was consequently aware that it was necessary

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141902, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (Commander SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 53) FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141902, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (Commander SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 54) FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.

\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 142003, October 1944 to All Flag Officers Combined Fleet; War Diary CRUDIV 7, WDC Document 161638.



to discount the Imperial General Headquarters' claims to a considerable extent.\*\*

Does it not seem strange therefore that he accepted these obvious exaggerations without, at least, querying his Chief of Staff concerning them? For, despite the fact that they were exaggerations, they had been sent by his Chief of Staff to all of his flag officers as though they were correct. He had reason to believe, of course, that his Chief of Staff's message reported the evaluations of the Naval General Staff, but he did not know what the Naval General Staff was hoping to accomplish by providing his flag officers with such incorrect information. Could it have been that they desired to bolster the morale of the base air forces and the surface forces which, because of a lack of success in operations previous to KING II, had learned to have a lack of confidence, not only in their ability, but also in the claims of their airmen?

That other Japanese officers recognized the above "T" Force claims as exaggerated and did not accept them without reservations is plain for COMBATDIV ONE, upon receipt of the above evaluation wrote: "Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet has announced without change the previously mentioned "T" Attack Force battle results. There are times when exaggeration is desirable in order to raise morale, but great caution should be exercised in order that men who are directing operations do not place undue reliance on battle reports and get carried away."\*\*

Sometime after this CinC, Combined Fleet learned that the major portion of the second attack wave of Kyushu planes had failed to locate the enemy. Why this was so is not entirely understood for the first wave, a small portion of the second wave and the third wave succeeded in locating TF 38, and delivering their attacks on schedule. The unit of the second wave which did attack attacked at 1708 and reported having damaged two cruisers.

The planes of these various attack waves did not return together to their numerous designated bases but returned in groups since they had attacked in groups.

Later during the early evening as the planes of the third attack wave landed on Formosa, CinC, Combined Fleet received more information. The pilots reported having delivered their attack between 1830 and 2024 and claimed sinking one CV, one CVL, one BB, one CA; probably sinking

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\* Admiral Soemu Toyoda, ex-IJN, The End of the Imperial Navy, (Tokyo 1950), pages 149-154.

\*\* Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary of, "SENSOROKU" Vol. II, March 15th, 1953, by Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha.



one CVL, one BB, two CL, and damaging one BB,\* and sinking one CVE.\*\* These reports were very incorrect.

The principal damage done to TF 38 was done to TG 38.1 at 1841 when a torpedo plane torpedoed the HOUSTON.\*\*\* In view of the fact that this was a strong attack and may have appeared successful to the pilots, it seems surprising that there is no reference to it in the Japanese reports. It is presumed therefore that all of the attack group were shot down. Naturally, CinC, Combined Fleet knew nothing about it.

It is not known what credence CinC, Combined Fleet gave to the claims of the "T" Force pilots. Certainly the claims were very high and might have been termed excessive even when viewed in the light of the Naval General Staff's evaluation for October 12th and 13th. However, he probably awaited evaluations from Commander SIXTH Base Air Force as well as from his Chief of Staff at Hiyoshi.

CinC, Combined Fleet most likely wondered what success Commander FIFTH Base Air Force's large scale attack from the Philippines, supposed to depart at 1430, had had against TF 38. Since this large attack group had failed to depart its bases owing to inability to complete preparations, CinC, Combined Fleet was probably informed of this fact. Actually, a small group of ten planes finally took off on schedule but not finding the enemy landed on Formosa. Sometime around 2220 CinC, Combined Fleet received Chief of Staff, FIRST Striking Force's dispatch\*\*\*\* advising that the FIRST Striking Force was being directed to complete battle preparations by evening of October 15th. What effect, if any, this dispatch had on his mental processes is not known. Whether he estimated that Commander FIRST Striking Force was preparing for sea because the SECOND Striking Force had been ordered to sea or whether he estimated that Commander FIRST Striking Force was preparing for a possible invasion of the Philippines is nowhere stated. In either case it should have been pleasing to him that his forces in the Lingga-Singapore area were prepared for any eventuality.

(b) Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 14th

Commander Mobile Force during the morning of October 14th took no important action.

At about 1245 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch instructions directing Commander SECOND Striking Force to expedite preparations and, when ready, to sortie immediately with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE to the waters east of Formosa and there to take advantage of any

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Detailed Action Report 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944-January 1945, WDC Document 160364 NA 12357.

\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 1944.

\*\*\*\* CofS, FIRST Striking Force Dispatch 142150, October 1944 to CofS, Combined Fleet, CofS, Mobile Force, CofS, SECOND Striking Force, BATDIV 1 War Diary, WDC Document 161638.



favorable opportunity (a) to attack and destroy damaged enemy ships and (b) to rescue Japanese air crews.\*

There is no information available as to the reaction of Commander Mobile Force to this dispatch. While such an operation had not been provided for in the basic plans CinC, Combined Fleet had, on October 10th, alerted the SECOND Striking Force plus CARDIV FOUR to sortie. Likewise this dispatch of a part of the SECOND Striking Force to the operating area did not preclude its joining up at a later time with the remainder of the surface forces and operating in accordance with the SHO plan, provided of course that it had not been destroyed in the meantime; Commander Mobile Force realized that this splitting of his SECOND Striking Force entailed additional planning for the employment of his forces should SHO One or Two be activated.

As a consequence of the above considerations Commander Mobile Force decided at 1412 to transfer those units of the SECOND Striking Force not scheduled to sortie, viz., DESRON ELEVEN, and DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE to the Main Force.\*\* This was a sound decision since Commander Mobile Force also commanded directly the Main Force. By transferring these destroyers to that force he (a) thereby relieved Commander SECOND Striking Force of the responsibility for their operations, which responsibilities might have had an adverse effect on his decisions while in operations at sea against the enemy, (b) assumed direct command over them and thereby denied Commander SECOND Striking Force the opportunity of ordering them to sea in support of his own operations should he consider that necessary and (c) provided support forces such as plane guards and AA defense for his Main Force should that one be ordered to sea for whatever purpose.

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force,  
October 14th.

The FIRST Striking Force remained in the Lingga-Singapore area and continued training and preparations for sortie. Commander FIRST Striking Force maintained a running estimate of the situation to the north and closely observed the Allied air successes as reported by CinC, Combined Fleet, and the Japanese successes against TF 38 also as reported by CinC, Combined Fleet.

At about 1245 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch directing the SECOND Striking Force, composed of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141216, October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 348) WDC Document 161638.

\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 141412, October 1944 to Combined Fleet, Mobile Force DesOpOrd 56) War Diary DESRON 11, WDC Document 161715.



DESRON ONE, to complete preparations immediately and then to sortie to the waters east of Formosa where it was to attack and destroy enemy damaged ships and to rescue downed aviators.\*

Also about this time he received word of the bombing of Formosa by China-based B-29's.\*\*

Since this followed the original Japanese intelligence reports which forecast that the Philippines would be isolated by Allied carrier attacks and by attacks by China-based B-29's and since he knew that Japanese estimates of the situation had forecast (a) that an amphibious landing might be expected in the southern Philippines during or after the last ten days in October, (b) that such a landing would be preceded by heavy air strikes in southern Kyushu, Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippines, and (c) that a large enemy amphibious force had been reported in the Hollandia area on October 9th, but that since that date there had been no further reports, he was concerned lest an Allied landing follow these air strikes. He appears to have realized that the amphibious force observed on October 9th might well be at sea and since the distance from Hollandia to Mindanao was roughly but 1500 miles this force might attempt to land shortly. He also knew from the contact reports that despite the Japanese successes there were still many carriers within TF 38.

Sometime before 1600 he directed the AKISHIMO and the HAYASHIMO to proceed to Manila for the purpose of transporting the Headquarters of the THIRTY-FIRST Army from Manila to Saigon. As a consequence of this order these destroyers departed Singapore for Manila at 1600.\*\*\*

At about 1840 he received a dispatch from CinC, Combined Fleet reporting that the enemy task forces, as a result of the Japanese air attacks, were retiring in defeat, and directing the Base Air Force and the SECOND Striking Force to destroy the enemy with all forces at their command.\*\*\*\*

At about 2030 he received a dispatch from the CinC, Combined Fleet stating that as a result of the "T" Force attacks on the nights of October 12th and 13th a total of nine to thirteen Allied carriers had

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141216, October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders Combined Fleet (CinC, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 348) WDC Document 161638.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* War Diary AKISHIMO, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 161636.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141808, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH and SEVENTH Air Fleets and Commander SECOND Striking Force (CinC, Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd 8) WDC Document 161005.



been sunk, and that other enemy ships had been damaged.\*

He does not appear to have believed the claims set forth in the above dispatch, nor did he believe that the Allied carriers were retiring because of Japanese air attacks for he stated in his action report that, despite all of these and other claims, he had decided that an invasion of the Philippines was inevitable and therefore had discontinued the training operations he had been pursuing.\*\*

Whether this was a hindsight decision since his action report was dated December 1st, 1944, or whether it is a fact that he, alone of all Japanese senior commanders connected with this operation, correctly evaluated the Allied plans and the Japanese and Allied claims is not known. However, it is known that he had decided that his command was likely to be called on, possibly at once, and that he should be prepared for battle for at 2250 his Chief of Staff advised the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet, Chief of Staff, Mobile Force, Chief of Staff, SECOND Striking Force and Imperial General Headquarters as follows: "(1) With the exception of the ships indicated below, the FIRST Striking Force has completed battle preparations and is standing by at Lingga. All ships at Lingga are expected to complete fueling by evening, October 15th.

(a) Ships in drydock: NOSHIRO (undocks October 16th), ISOKAZE (undocks October 15th).

(b) CRUDIV SIXTEEN will complete installation of radar gear at Singapore on October 15th. AOBA is scheduled to enter drydock for propeller repair from October 16th-19th (she can make thirty knots in her present condition). DESRON TWO (HAYASHIMO, AKISHIMO) are en route Manila."\*\*\*

This was an intelligent dispatch in that it correctly advised the several force commanders as to the battle readiness of his command.

(2) Operations of Commander Main Force, October 14th.

Commander Main Force during October 14th took no important action. However, at 1412, his command was increased by the

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\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 142003, October 1944 to All Flag Officers Combined Fleet; War Diary CRUDIV 7, WDC Document 161638.

\*\* Action Report FIRST Striking Force, October 16th-28th, 1944, SHO Operations, WDC Document 161641.

\*\*\* Chief of Staff, FIRST Striking Force Dispatch 142250, October 1944; War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.



addition of DESRON ELEVEN and DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE.\* All five ships of DESRON ELEVEN (TAMA (CL), SUGI, MOMI, KASHI, KAYA, HINOKI) were at sea en route Iwakuni except the TAMA which was already at Iwakuni and the SUGI which was at Kure.\*\* Of the two destroyers of DESRON FORTY-ONE, one - the FUYUTSUKI - was at Kure, the other was at sea en route Kagoshima.\*\*\* Of the four destroyers of DESDIV SIXTY-ONE (HATSUZUKI, WAKATSUKI, AKITSUKI, SUZUTSUKI), two were at sea in the Inland Sea; the third - the AKITSUKI - was at Kure; the fourth - the SUZUTSUKI - was at Oita.\*\*\* He now commanded CARDIV's ONE, THREE and FOUR, DESRON ELEVEN, DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE, and the light cruiser OYODO which was at Oita.\*\*\*\*

(3) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 14th.

During the forenoon of October 14th, Commander SECOND Striking Force continued his preparations for possible sortie and combat operations.

At about 1246 he received dispatch orders from CinC, Combined Fleet directing him as follows:

"Immediately upon completion of preparations the SECOND Striking Force (CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE) will sortie to the waters east of Formosa and will take advantage of any favorable opportunity to attack and destroy damaged enemy ships, and to rescue Japanese air crews."\*\*\*\*\*

Commander SECOND Striking Force now estimated the situation. He realized that the two basic units of the Striking Force were separated, that is, DESRON ONE was, for the large part, at Kure, whereas CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE was at Iwakuni. He decided that it would be wise to concentrate these two units at Iwakuni. Therefore, at 1332 he directed COMDESRON ONE "to concentrate at Iwakuni."\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 141412, October 1944 to Combined Fleet, Mobile Force (Mobile Force DesOpOrd 56); War Diary DESRON 11, WDC Document 161715.

\*\* War Diary DESRON 11, October 1944, WDC Document 161715 NA 12712.

\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739; also Tabular Records of Movements of Destroyers, WDC Documents 160620 and 160621 NA 11790.

\*\*\*\* War Diary OYODO, October 1944, WDC Document 161636 NA 11973.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141216, October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commands, Combined Fleet; War Diary DESRON 1, October 1st-31st 1944 (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 348) WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 141332, October 1944 to COMDESRON 1, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.



As a consequence of these instructions, received by COMDESRON ONE at 1500, COMDESDIV SEVEN with DESDIV SEVEN and the SHIRANUHI departed Kure at 1630 and COMDESRON ONE in the ABUKUMA departed Kure at 1700 and proceeded to Iwakuni where they arrived at 1915. Meanwhile, DESDIV TWENTY-ONE and the KASUMI remained at Kure where they expedited readiness for sea.\*

Soon after the arrival of COMDESRON ONE at Iwakuni Commander SECOND Striking Force at 2000 held a conference on the projected operations.\* Although no information is available concerning this conference it appears that among other items it was concerned with the time of sortie which was affected in part (a) by the difficulty of transitting Bungo Suido during darkness,\*\* (b) by the probable time of completion of DESDIV TWENTY-ONE's overhaul since the three destroyers of that DESDIV composed a large portion of his destroyer force (three out of seven destroyers) and (c) by the possible fact that the Japanese knew that Allied submarines normally operated on the surface at night and were, therefore, more dangerous to Japanese operations at that time than during daylight when Japanese air power generally forced them to submerge. He decided to depart from Iwakuni at 2400, October 14th, and to pass through Bungo Suido at 0700, October 15th.\*

The long delay in the Navy Yard at Kure required to complete the KASUMI (the KASUMI departed Kure at 2200),\* the still longer delay required to complete DESDIV TWENTY-ONE (0330 October 15th),\* and the drydocking of the HATSUSHIMO (she undocked at 2030 October 14th), plainly indicates that CinC, Combined Fleet's sortie order came as a surprise to Commander SECOND Striking Force. Apparently that commander had arrived at the opinion that there was to be no sortie, for his command was clearly far from ready. It would seem as if (a) CinC, Combined Fleet's order of 1204 October 10th to activate SHO One and SHO Two for the base air forces only, (b) CinC, Combined Fleet's order of 2117, October 11th to cancel the sortie alert for the SECOND Striking Force and CARDIV FOUR (less air units) and (c) the reported great success of the base air forces to date had influenced that commander to the erroneous conclusion that time was not particularly important and, therefore, he had continued with routine operations, including drydocking of ships.

It seems clear that CinC, Combined Fleet, who was fully familiar with the dangers of night piloting in Bungo Suido and was familiar also with the operating techniques of Allied submarines, expected

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\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* Detailed Action Report Main Force, Mobile Force SHO One Operation, October 20th-29th, 1944, Operations of Main Force, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.



Commander SECOND Striking Force to sortie without delay, and without consideration of the adverse factors above referred to. Since the destruction of Allied damaged ships, and the recovery of downed Japanese pilots were the objectives sought by CinC, Combined Fleet, does it not seem correct that in the present situation time was an essential component in the accomplishment of these objectives? A delay of approximately eleven hours between the receipt of CinC, Combined Fleet's original order and the projected time of sortie from Iwakuni seems excessive indeed.

(c) Operations of the Base Air Forces, October 14th.

(1) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, having the evening before issued his orders for operations on the 14th, took no further action prior to the launching of his morning searches.

At about 0005 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch wherein that commander stated that he considered that the first "T" Force attack made at dusk on October 12th had succeeded in sinking or damaging more than six ships.\*

It is clear that at sometime before 0149 he received word that one of the Allied pilots shot down, presumably the previous day, had given considerable information concerning the composition and contemplated movement of TF 38 off Formosa for, at 0149, his Chief of Staff sent a dispatch to the FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla in particular since that command was launching a large general offensive that day, and to other units of the SIXTH Base Air Force in general, advising them:

(a) Of the two enemy carrier groups which had been sighted the previous afternoon by the ELEVENTH Reconnaissance Unit; the first group including one large and two medium carriers and the second group including two large and two medium carriers, all of which he termed "fleet" carriers.

(b) That a prisoner of war, a pilot from the WASP, had reported that the naval forces east of Formosa consisted at that time of about nine fleet carriers, about twenty-five replacement carriers, six battleships, about twenty cruisers and fifty destroyers; that this

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 132333, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, 51st Air Flotilla, Combined Escort Force, WDC Document 160579.



force was at present cruising in position bearing 123°(T), distant 180 miles from Takao (this was questioned) with a separately operating supply force and that the Allies planned to continue these attacks for several more days.\*

In view of the pertinence of the above dispatch it seems wise, at this point, to analyze its substance.

(1) There were at this time in TF 38 exactly nine large carriers (CV), and eight light carriers (CVL) instead of nine fleet carriers; there were exactly six battleships; there were fourteen instead of twenty cruisers and fifty-eight instead of fifty destroyers. However, the total number of cruisers and destroyers reported was almost exactly correct, there being seventy-two instead of seventy.

(2) The figure of twenty-five replacement carriers (CVE) was approximately correct for the total number of replacement carriers, available in the Pacific since there were twenty-one escort carriers assigned as carrier transports. However, it was quite incorrect as regards replacement carriers supplying TF 38 at this time inasmuch as there were but four escort carriers assigned to this duty. There were in addition three escort carriers which were employed as escorts for the fueling group to which the above four replacement carriers were attached.

(3) Since the information divulged was almost exactly correct as regards the battleships, cruisers and destroyers within TF 38 it seems likely that the pilot gave the correct number of aircraft carriers there as well. Thus, instead of giving nine fleet carriers it seems probable that he gave nine large carriers, which was the right figure, and that the interrogators confused this to mean nine fleet carriers. This would account for the absence of any light carriers (CVL) in the basic dispatch. What then happened to the light carriers? Does it not seem probable that these were included by the interrogators with the replacement carriers?

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\* CofS SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 140149, October 1944 to 51st Air Flotilla and SIXTH Base Air Force, Detailed Action Report No. 4, 51st Air Flotilla, October 10th-November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645 NA 12262.

(4) The information was incorrect (a) as regards location, since TF 38 was operating some ninety miles to the northward of the reported position. This fact was known to the Japanese and it was for that reason that the Chief of Staff SIXTH Base Air Force questioned the location in his dispatch, and (b) as regards continuing the operations against Formosa for several days more as the plan called for discontinuing the operations after the air strikes scheduled for October 13th.

At this time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force likely recalled the intelligence dispatch from Imperial General Headquarters issued on October 11th which stated that TF 38 consisted in part of eight large carriers and eight cruiser-carriers, a sum total of sixteen fleet carriers. He could now observe that there was a difference of seven carriers between the CinC's intelligence estimate and the prisoner-of-war's statement. From this he may have concluded that his pilots' claims of damage inflicted on TF 38 on the two days of October 12th and 13th were reasonably accurate.

At 0553 the first search plane, a two-engine land bomber took off from Tainan. This was followed at 0620 by a second plane.\* Both of these aircraft were from the Tainan Air Group. They were to search the following line: Miyako to Ishigaki to Garan Bi, thence return to Ishigaki flying a track sixty miles to the east of the southbound track, thence fly forty miles to the east and return south on a course of 212°(T) for 250 miles, thence return to Garan Bi.\*\* The first plane was to commence this search from Miyako at 0800 to be followed by the second one hour later.

At about this same time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew that some of the units of Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla's general attack force were already leaving bases in southern Kyushu for their staging base at Okinawa.

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\* Merit Report, 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.

\*\* Commander 14th Combined Air Group Dispatch 140123, October 1944 to 14th Combined Group (14th Combined Group DesOpOrd 129) WDC Document 161422.



At 0630 Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla at Shinchiku launched his morning search. Four land attack planes were to cover the sector 111°-153°(T) to a distance of 600 miles. One land reconnaissance plane was to cover the adjacent sector 060°-100°(T) to a distance of 200 miles.\* These aircraft were from the 708th Attack Unit detachment at Shinchiku.\*\*

At about 0730 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that fighters of the Tainan Air Group were engaging enemy carrier planes over Tainan and Kozan.\*\*\*

Between 0800 and 0900 he received several reports of enemy air attacks on Formosa, and some information concerning the location of TF 38. He learned that (a) Tainan Air Group had engaged one hundred enemy planes (b) the air groups at Takao and Taichu had each reported that their bases were under attack by forty-fifty enemy aircraft,\*\*\* and (c) Shinchiku in the north was being attacked by about fifty aircraft.\*\*\*\* All in all he learned that about 250 enemy aircraft had attacked his Formosa bases.\*\*\*\*\* This was a correct report for TF 38 had launched 246 aircraft to attack Formosa.\*\*\*\*\*

During the same period, at about 0820, he received the first contact report of the day. This report stated that at 0750 an enemy carrier task group had been sighted at Latitude 23°-15'N, Longitude 123°-15'E on course south.\*\*\*\*\* He received additional contact reports as follows: (a) At about 0820 from a Shinchiku search plane that it had made a contact.\*\* The data available does not indicate what was sighted or the position. This was probably a submarine sighting since at 0747 the Allied submarine SILVERSIDES had reported sighting a land

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\* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 132337, October 1944 to Western Attack Force THREE, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit, Searches and Patrols "F's" (Shinchiku) Sector October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\* Merit Report 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.

\*\*\*\* Shinchiku Air Base Summary Dispatch 142113 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Reports Carriers of TF 38.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 9, 708th Attack Unit, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.



attack plane on patrol in Latitude 24°-46'N, Longitude 122°-34'E.\* This position was in the sector assigned to the search plane and there were no Allied surface forces in that sector. No attack was made. (b) At about 0900 - (1) from a search plane that at 0840 a second task group had been sighted at Latitude 23°-25'N, Longitude 122°-55'E on course southeast,\*\* (2) from a dispatch originated by a staff officer, FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla reporting that an RDF fix had been obtained at 0728 on what was believed to be an enemy task force at Latitude 22°-00'N, Longitude 122°-00'E.\*\*\*

The two contact reports on task groups were apparently made by the two engine land bombers which were searching from Tainan. The 0740 position was actually about fifteen miles east of the most northerly group of TF 38; the 0850 position was about twelve miles north of the same group.

At 0900 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew that Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla was launching his search. This search was to cover the sector 176°-218°(T) to a distance of 600 miles between bearings 176° and 205°(T) and 540 miles for the remainder of the sector.\*\*\*\* Why these search planes were launched so late is not known. At about this same time the first phase of the general air offensive presumably commenced.

The plan\*\*\*\*\* of Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla for the general attack consisted of an attack in two waves. Each wave in turn was composed of a reconnaissance unit, a fighter unit, a bomber unit and a torpedo unit. With the exception of the torpedo unit of the first wave, all aircraft were to stage through Okinawa. This torpedo unit was to attack direct from Kanoya presumably joining the other units of the first wave over Okinawa. All units staging through Okinawa were scheduled to depart their bases in southern Kyushu between 0600 and 0700. The first attack group was scheduled to depart Okinawa at 1200; the second at 1400. All aircraft were to land on Formosa after the attack. The air strength allocated to each attack group follows:

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- \* War Patrol Report SILVERSIDES Report of ELEVENTH War Patrol, Serial 0206, November 26th, 1944.
  - \*\* Detailed Action Report No. 9, 708th Attack Unit, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.
  - \*\*\* Staff Officer, 51st Air Flotilla, Dispatch 140832 to all Flying Units of the General Attack Force, WDC Document 160258.
  - \*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 131811, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 45) WDC Document 160137.
  - \*\*\*\*\* War Diary 51st Air Flotilla, Air Attack Plan October 14th, 1944 (51st Air Flotilla Operations Order 1) WDC Document 161644.



(a) First Attack Group, fourteen reconnaissance planes, eighty-eight fighter planes, fifty-one bombing planes and twenty-four torpedo planes - a total of 177 planes.

(b) Second Attack Group, twenty reconnaissance planes, 130 fighter planes, fifty-six bombing planes and sixty-one torpedo planes - a total of 267 planes.

Thus, he had a total of 444 planes engaged in this attack operation.

At about 0900, the exact time being unavailable, the reconnaissance unit of the first attack group departed from Okinawa. This unit actually numbered twelve reconnaissance aircraft\* and was ordered to cover the sector 130°-243°(T) from Okinawa. The radius of each search sector was 300 miles except between bearings 211°(T) and 233°(T) where the radius was 400 miles.\*\* This search was dense, being based on a fifteen mile range of visibility and, in conjunction with the searches from Shinchiku and Garan Bi, covered the probable area of operations of TF 38. Why it was not coordinated with the search of Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla which departed Okinawa at about the same time and covered some of the same area is not known. Possibly it was due to difficulty in communications between aircraft of different commands, but proper coordination could have increased the area covered or reduced the number of aircraft required for search.

At about this same time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that Aparri had been attacked by Allied carrier aircraft. What his reaction was to this attack is not known. He had received two contact reports already which indicated that two task groups of the enemy force were about 300 miles north of Aparri. Perhaps he decided that this was a long-range air strike from these two task groups; perhaps he thought that the strike had come from the third group further to the south whose presence had been indicated by the 0728 RDF report from Kanoya. His information was incomplete and inconclusive and since it did not specify the number of carriers sighted, he could not determine with surety whether or not all Allied carriers still believed to be afloat were accounted for.

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* War Diary 51st Air Flotilla, Air Attack Plan, October 14th, 1944 Appendix 2, WDC Document 161644.



As the morning progressed and no further reports of enemy air activity over Formosa were received after about 0930,\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force likely decided that the Allied Task Force was retiring. From the reports of damage claimed by his pilots, he could readily decide that his attacking aircraft had forced the retirement of TF 38 and that this morning's strike had been in the nature of a defensive cover for that retirement. He knew that at about noon his general attack would commence departure from Okinawa to be followed by a third attack by the "T" Force. Search planes were already out to locate targets for this attack. He may have believed that these attacks would succeed in completing the accomplishment of his objective - the destruction of the enemy task force.

At about 1030 aircraft of the torpedo unit of the first wave of Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla's general attack took off from Kanoya. These were twenty land bombers armed with torpedoes of the 405th and 406th Attack Units.\*\* They were to rendezvous with the main strength of the first wave over Okinawa.

At about 1125 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received his fourth contact of the day. A Shinchiku search plane had reported sighting at 1055 in Latitude 19°-56'N, Longitude 122°-58'E, two enemy surface ships and had further reported that visibility in the sighting area was poor due to rain squalls.\*\*\* This search plane was one of the four which had departed Shinchiku at 0630. This one had been ordered to cover the sector 143°-153°(T) but for reasons not known covered instead an irregular area to the east and southeast of Formosa.\*\*\* This contact was approximately 210 miles south of the position of the two groups previously sighted and definitely indicated that there was, in fact, a third task group to the south. This third task group was TG 38.4 which, at this time, was about twenty miles northeast of the position reported. It seems logical to assume that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force decided that this was the group which had attacked Aparri, since its position was but 110 miles northeast of that base. If he did so, he was correct, for at 0600 TG 38.4 had launched an attack of forty-eight VF against Aparri and Laoag.\*\*\*\*

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group, Searches and Patrols of F's (Shinchiku) Sector, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 14th, 1944.



From his contact reports Commander SIXTH Base Air Force could plainly see that the Allied carrier task groups were not concentrated but were, instead, widely separated - that is, there were two groups which were together off Formosa, and one group some 210 miles to the south of these two groups. He could also plainly see that this separation precluded attacks being made by his SIXTH Base Air Force on the southern groups since that force had been oriented towards the northern groups. He probably felt that this was not an unmixed blessing since it would reduce the opposition his attack groups would encounter and would thereby facilitate the accomplishment of their objectives. The question probably arose as to what he should do about the southern group. He correctly decided to do nothing since that group was well within range of the FIFTH Base Air Force and was a suitable target for that command.

At 1200 six aircraft of the TWELFTH Reconnaissance Unit, and between 1213 and 1330 six two-engine bombers, carrying flares, from the FOURTEENTH Reconnaissance Unit departed Kanoya to search for the enemy task force.\* These aircraft were the search unit of the "T" Force attack group which, as noted earlier, was to be composed of all "T" Force planes remaining in southern Kyushu and was to make a dusk or night attack separate from that of Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla. No information is available as to the sectors searched.\*\*

The six aircraft from the FOURTEENTH Reconnaissance Unit were directed to discontinue search at dusk and then perform the mission of direct cooperation,\*\*\* (pathfinding and attack control).

At about 1245 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that CinC, Combined Fleet had ordered the sortie of the SECOND Striking Force to the waters east of Formosa to take advantage of opportunities (a) to destroy cripples which might result from the general air attacks on TF 38, and (b) to rescue Japanese air crews.\*\*\*\* This is the first indication of any attempt on the part of the Japanese in this operation to recover downed air personnel. What caused this special measure is not indicated, but it was very probably due to the high losses sustained by the "T" Force in its first two attacks. Since the "T" Force represented

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 9, 708th Attack Unit, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* War Diary 12th Reconnaissance Unit Kanoya Detachment, October 12th-15th, 1944, WDC Document 160381.

\*\*\* 708th Attack Unit Operations Plan, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141216, October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Combined Fleet (Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 348) WDC Document 161638.



the best and most highly trained personnel of the base air forces, the loss of its personnel could ill be afforded.

That the Japanese were well behind American practice in this regard is not only obvious from the fact that they made no attempt to recover their downed pilots until four days had elapsed since the first Allied attack had been made on Okinawa, but it is also obvious since the possibility of recovering such pilots by the employment of limited surface forces offered little chance of success. The Japanese gave no consideration to the employment of their submarines for this purpose, which the Allies had found to be highly effective.

At 1250 the "T" Force attack planes commenced take-off from Kanoya. Five land attack planes armed with torpedoes and two direct cooperation planes of 708th Attack Unit took off at this time.\* They were followed by ten two-engine land bombers of 501st Attack Unit.\*\* In addition the attack group included eight torpedo planes of the 703rd Attack Unit and fifteen heavy bombers carrying torpedoes from the NINETY-EIGHTH Air Regiment. In all there were about fifty-two aircraft including the reconnaissance units.\*\*\* This represented the remaining "T" Force strength available in Kyushu.

At about 1300 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that B-29 aircraft had been sighted over Tainan at 1240. During the ensuing hour sixty B-29's were reported in that area.\*\*\*\* Eight fighters of the 254th Air Group from the China Area Fleet attempted to intercept the B-29's over Takao but were unable to make contact.\*\*\*\*\*

At 1330 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew that the first wave of his general attack was taking off from Okinawa. As noted above, this wave was scheduled to consist of 163 aircraft exclusive of the reconnaissance group. Actually only 112 aircraft took off, but these seem to have been joined by the twenty which had departed from Kanoya at 1030 making a total of 132. The composition of this attack wave was eighty-two fighters, thirty bombers, and twenty torpedo planes.\*\*\*

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 9, 708th Attack Unit, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Detailed Action Reports of 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944-January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* Merit Report 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report 254th Air Group, Formosa Detachment, October 13th-27th, 1944, WDC Document 161429.



Some units of this attack group were unable to rendezvous due to poor visibility and proceeded to the target area independently.\*

At 1430 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew that the second wave of the general attack was departing from Okinawa. The planned strength of this group as noted earlier was 267 aircraft; actually but 225 planes took off. Unlike the first wave, the reconnaissance unit departed at the same time as the attack units. The composition of this wave was twelve reconnaissance planes, ninety-seven fighters, fourteen fighter-bombers, fifty-six bombers, and forty-six torpedo planes.\*\* The twelve planes of the reconnaissance unit were directed to search the sector bearing 050°-220°(T) from Okinawa to a distance of 300 miles.\*\*\* Why Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla selected this sector and range is not clear, since it was well to the east of the TF 38 groups reported earlier. Perhaps he had decided that the reconnaissance unit of the first wave would locate the known TF 38 groups and would thus provide targets for his second wave attack, and he had therefore determined to cover the area south, east, and northeast of Okinawa to ascertain whether some undamaged forces might be found farther to the east which would serve as more suitable targets for subsequent attacks. He may have had some indication, such as RDF reports, of forces operating farther to the east although the data available do not indicate that he did. Whatever his reason his decision seems sound.

At about this time he received an interesting contact report. The location or composition of the contact is not indicated in the data available but it was a 1300 sighting of TF 38.\*\*\*\* It had probably been made by aircraft of the reconnaissance unit of the first attack wave. Until now he had received no information on the location of what appeared to have been the main part of TF 38 since the 0840 contact. The regaining of contact was most important at this time for his attack groups were already airborne and the first wave would soon be approaching the combat area. For reasons not known, his planes had made no attempt to track the morning contacts. This failure to carry out the tracking procedures as laid down by CinC, Combined Fleet has already been commented upon. However, now that the position of TF 38 had been reestablished, he could await with confidence the results of his general

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\* Detailed Action Report, 5th Fighter Unit (752nd Air Group), Air Battle off Formosa, October 13th-16th, 1944, WDC Document 160364.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* 51st Air Flotilla Operations Order No. 1, October 13th, 1944, Appendix 1, Organization of Flying Units for General Attack, WDC Document 161644.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 252nd Attack Unit (701st Air Group) Air Battle off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160258.



air attack. Although he was probably not aware of it, this contact had been delayed in transmission to the attacking aircraft until 1540\* which time was after the attack of the first wave. The reasons for this delay are not known.

Shortly after 1430 he learned that the B-29's which had been sighted earlier over southwest Formosa (now reportedly numbering 100) had attacked the Okayama area between 1230 and 1430 and had heavily damaged the Takao and Tainan air bases,\*\* but had not succeeded in rendering them non-operational so his air units continued to use them. He learned also that no airborne interception of the attacking B-29's had been made, although several had been reported hit by ground fire.\*\*\* Actually this attack had been made by 108 B-29's from China bases which had dropped 651 tons of bombs in the Okayama area (southwest Formosa) and twenty-five tons on Taichu (central Formosa) and while so doing had had but three aircraft slightly damaged by AA fire.\*\*\*\*

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force should not have been surprised by this attack, for on October 4th the Navy General Staff had had reason to believe that the U.S. FOURTEENTH and TWENTIETH Air Forces in China would participate in an attack on Formosa in cooperation with the enemy task force.\*\*\*\*\* This was the first such attack. Although the attack had inflicted heavy damage, it did not materially reduce Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's ability to apply pressure on TF 38. Possibly Commander SIXTH Base Air Force thought that, after another day, with the enemy task force disposed of as seemed probable at this time, he could give full attention to taking more effective action against any subsequent B-29 attacks.

By this time he received a report of damage inflicted at Shinchiku by the attack of TF 38 planes in the morning. This report stated that half of a barracks and half of a hangar had been destroyed and a part of the torpedo maintenance shop damaged although such maintenance could

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- \* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 252nd Attack Unit (701st Air Group) Air Battle off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160258.
  - \*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\*\* Merit Report, 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.
  - \*\*\*\* 20th Bomber Command Tactical Mission Report, Mission Number 10, October 28th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Material for Situation Estimates, First Section, Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764.



be continued. Fourteen of about fifty attacking enemy fighters had been shot down.\* What damage to other installations was reported is not indicated in the data available. Such damage, while it may have caused some inconvenience and minor changes in the air operations, does not appear to have materially affected the execution of the air plans then underway.

At about 1450\*\* units of the first wave reached the combat area. As noted earlier, they had not all been able to rendezvous after take-off from Okinawa due to poor visibility and some units had been forced to proceed independently. Data available covering the actions of the various units of the attack groups is not complete. However, the following is considered to give a reasonably accurate account of the attacks.

On arriving in the area the attack units found the weather poor for search operations since the ceiling was low, the rain squalls numerous. Some of the attack units, therefore, assumed search formations and by this means succeeded in discovering two task groups.\*\*

At about 1510 units of the first wave attacked a task group reportedly composed of four carriers, two battleships, and one cruiser in Latitude 22°-45'N, Longitude 123°-55'E. This was TG 38.3 which consisted of four carriers, four battleships, two cruisers, and destroyers. Pilots reported scoring one hit on each of two carriers, one of which took a list to starboard after being hit.\*\*\* Actually no damage was received by TG 38.3.

At 1518 other attack units of the first wave sighted a second task group reportedly composed of two carriers and one battleship and other units in Latitude 22°-10'N, Longitude 124°-10'E. These attack units immediately attacked, and pilots claimed a bomb hit on each carrier.\*\* This was TG 38.2 which was a five carrier group. One carrier, the HANCOCK received minor damage from a bomb hit received at 1523.\*\*\*\* No other damage was received.

Four of these attacking aircraft out of approximately twenty-five were from the 752nd Air Group, the units represented by the others are not known. Twenty-three planes were claimed shot down by CAP and the remainder retired.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 142113, October 1944 to authorized stations, WDC Document 160579.

\*\* Detailed Action Reports of 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944 - January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 252nd Attack Unit (701st Air Group) Air Battle off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160258.

\*\*\*\* War Diary HANCOCK, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.2, October 14th, 1944.



Although the data available does not specifically so indicate, it appears probable, from the composition and general plan of the attack, that Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla had intended that this wave should execute a coordinated attack. In this he was thwarted by the weather. Not only did some of his units fail to rendezvous after take-off and encounter difficulty in locating TF 38, due to poor visibility, but the low ceilings and rain squalls in the combat area precluded the execution of a normal coordinated attack. The ceiling at this time was about 1200-3000 feet and TG's 38.2 and 38.3 were operating on the western edge of an extensive squall line which extended southwest from Okinawa. All attacking planes had to use a low altitude approach in order to stay clear of the clouds. In this connection it might be recalled that only the "T" Force had been specially trained for attacks under such low visibility conditions. Other air units had not stressed this type of training and their offensive capabilities were therefore severely reduced by the conditions existing at the time of the attack. Also in this connection it should be stressed here that these conditions also seriously hampered the defending fighters in their efforts to locate targets, and seriously hampered the ships of TF 38 because the Japanese low altitude approaches reduced the detection range of the Allied radars. However, in all fairness to the Japanese it seems correct to say that, in view of the lack of proficiency of the Japanese air units in operating conditions so adverse as to necessitate a change of attack tactics and a piecemeal rather than a concentrated attack they were more affected by the weather conditions than were the planes of TF 38.

By about 1600, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had received flash reports of the claims of damage inflicted by the pilots of the first wave attack which claims totaled four carriers damaged. These reports should have given him considerable gratification for this was the first attack by air units, other than "T" Force units, against TF 38 and the success of these units indicated that they too could inflict serious damage on the enemy possibly because the enemy's powers of resistance had been lessened by previous attacks. Knowing as he did that the second wave of Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla's attack was considerably stronger than was the first wave, and was to strike a damaged force, he could now anticipate that even greater damage would be inflicted by this second attack. To this would be added the damage caused by the third "T" Force attack which would occur at dusk. He could estimate that, by the end of this day's operation, there would be only remnants remaining of TF 38. However, with victory apparently so close he did not desire to reduce the heavy pressure he was exerting on the enemy. His action in maintaining the offensive was militarily correct since it tended to disorganize the enemy and to force him to conform to his plans. While Japanese instructions in matters of this kind are not available to this study it is assumed that they bore close resemblance to those of the U.S. Navy which today (paraphrased) state



that initial successes should be exploited at once in order to accelerate their effect and should be extended to complete annihilation of the enemy.\*

At 1613 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, acting on a recommendation received the previous day from his Staff Officer at Kanoya, directed that all reinforcing units from the SEVENTH Base Air Force would be incorporated into the Western Attack Force ONE under the command of Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla. He further designated Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla to command all SIXTH Base Air Force units in Kyushu except the "T" Force. These organizational arrangements were effective as of October 12th.\*\* Actually they had apparently been made effective, at least in part, by some prior designation, for Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla was already exercising command over all SIXTH Base Air Force units in Kyushu except the "T" Force and was carrying out the general air offensive.

At 1650 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force advised his commanders on Formosa that large numbers of aircraft would be landing extending into the night and he directed the following action in regard to these aircraft that, (a) they be refueled and rearmed, (b) those landing at bases other than Shinchiku, Taichu, Tainan and Daikozan be directed to concentrate at one of these four bases by dawn of the next day, and (c) a report be made to his headquarters of battle results and of the number of planes present.\*\*\* It is thus evident that at this time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force intended to continue his general offensive on the next day.

At about 1700 he received a contact report from a plane of the TWELFTH Reconnaissance Unit which had left Kanoya at 1200. This plane reported sighting at 1630 a task group of ten ships including carriers, battleships, and destroyers. The position is not indicated in the data available.\*\*\*\*

At about this same time units of the second attack wave arrived in the combat area. These units had encountered bad weather en route

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- \* General Tactical Instructions U.S. Fleets USF-2. Navy Department Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1947, para. 1323.
  - \*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141613, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 51), WDC Document 160258.
  - \*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141650, October 1944 to Commanders 21st and 25th Air Flotillas, 14th Combined Air Group (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 52) FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary 12th Reconnaissance Unit, Kanoya Detachment, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160381.



and had become separated into several groups. How many of them had received the 1300 position of TF 38, which had been broadcasted at 1540, is not known, nor is it indicated whether or not they received the 1630 position reported by the TWELFTH Reconnaissance Unit plane. It seems clear, however, that the proficiency of many of these units in flying and navigating in bad weather was poor, for but few of the units made any contact. One unit that did make contact, was the 252nd Attack Unit composed of seventeen carrier type torpedo planes, which sighted at 1704 in Latitude 21°-55'N, Longitude 124°-45'E, on an easterly course, an enemy task group of three carriers and supporting ships. At 1708 the 252nd Attack Unit attacked and claimed having damaged two cruisers, while losing all but one of its planes.\* This task group was TG 38.3 which had been attacked at 1708 by an estimated twenty-five to thirty aircraft. The aircraft which approached from all directions, low on the water, under low ceilings and in an area of numerous rain squalls inflicted no damage on TG 38.3\*\* Other groups of the second attack wave were in close proximity to Allied task groups, but were unable to make contact. At one time as many as ten different groups of Japanese aircraft were tracked by Allied radars.\*\*\* Several of these groups were attacked by fighter aircraft of TF 38,\*\*\*\* but the data available does not indicate how many were shot down. After failing to make contact the several separated groups landed at bases on Formosa and the western Nansei Shoto. The total damage claimed in this near-abortive attack of 213 planes exclusive of the reconnaissance unit was two cruisers damaged.

At about 1720, possibly at the same time as he was receiving flash reports from the second wave attack groups, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received a second contact report from the TWELFTH Reconnaissance Unit search. A plane of this search reported sighting at 1650 a second task group composed of one carrier, one escort carrier, one battleship and several destroyers. The search plane reported that it had been taken under fire but not damaged. As with the 1630 contact report the position of this enemy task group is not indicated in the data available.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 252nd Attack Unit (701st Air Group) Air Battle off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160258.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.3, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary HANCOCK, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 263rd Attack Unit, SHO Operations, October 14th-21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004 and War Diary Katori Detachment 752nd Air Group, 256th Attack Unit, SHO Operations Expeditionary Unit, October 13th-25th, 1944, WDC Document 161634.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary 12th Reconnaissance Unit, Kanoya Detachment, October 12th-15th, 1944, WDC Document 160381.



What Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's reaction to these contacts was is not known, but it seems probable that he considered that these two groups reported by the TWELFTH Reconnaissance Unit aircraft were the same as those which were attacked by the two waves of the general air attack. At this time he appears to have accepted generally the pilots' reports of damage inflicted in the previous days' attacks and therefore it was unlikely that more than the two carrier groups existed in the area east of Formosa. By this time, too, he knew that his regular searches from Garan Bi, Shinchiku, and Okinawa had returned to their bases without reporting any additional contacts. Why no contact was reported by the search planes of Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla from Okinawa is not known, for TF 38 was operating in the area supposedly covered. It may have been due in part to the state of the weather which was scattered to broken clouds with bases of 1200 to 3000 feet and moderate rain squalls. Information available does not indicate whether or not these planes were equipped with radar. At this time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that the Shinchiku search plane in the sector 123°-133°(T) from that base was missing. As this sector was adjacent to the positions of both the 0740 contact and the enemy position as reported by the attack group at 1510, he could assume that it had been shot down.

Shortly after 1808 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received the order issued at that time by CinC, Combined Fleet stating that the enemy was at that time retiring in defeat as a result of the effective attacks already delivered and directing the base air forces and the SECOND Striking Force to destroy the remaining enemy with all forces.\* It is probable that this order had been discussed by him with CinC, Combined Fleet prior to its issuance and therefore its contents were already known. As has been noted previously, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had anticipated continuing the action on the next day when, at 1650, he had directed the concentration of his aircraft on Formosa by dawn. Since that time he, and presumably CinC, Combined Fleet, had received information that another task group, which included three carriers, had been attacked by the second wave of the general attack, but that only two cruisers had been hit. It must have been clear then that there were still carrier targets available and that some would, perhaps, still remain after the impending "T" Force attack.

At about 1830 the attack groups of the "T" Force arrived in the combat area. It appears that, as with the previous attacks, these groups had proceeded separately. At 1831 one group attacked TG 38.1 and at 1841 succeeded in scoring a torpedo hit on the HOUSTON.\*\*

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141808, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH Base Air Forces and Commander SECOND Striking Force, WDC Document 161005.

\*\* Action Report HOUSTON, Report of Actions Occurring October 12th, 13th, 14th, 1944, Serial 0134, October 20th, 1944.



While the available data is incomplete, it is probable that this attack was made by the 501st Attack Unit. This unit, which had departed from Kanoya at 1400 to attack, consisted of eight two-engine land bombers carrying torpedoes. Since all eight planes failed to return\* and since CTG 38.1 claimed shooting down eight attacking planes\*\* it seems correct to say that CTG 38.1's claims were justified. Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received no information of this attack.

At 1854 a plane of the FOURTEENTH Reconnaissance Unit reported an enemy surface force at Latitude 22°-45'N, Longitude 124°-15'E on course east. Six minutes later four attack planes of the 708th Attack Unit reached the area, took attack formation, but were unable to sight the enemy. At 1907 a direct cooperation plane of this attack unit sighted a heavily damaged battleship or cruiser at Latitude 22°-50'N, Longitude 124°-10'E. This may have been the damaged HOUSTON, although the position was about twenty miles northeast of the HOUSTON's position. At 1910 another direct cooperation plane sighted the same force which had been reported at 1854. One plane of the attack group made a torpedo attack, but the results were not noted. This was the only actual attack made by the 708th Attack Unit and at 2020 the planes of this unit commenced retirement. One attack plane failed to return.\*\*\*

At 1902, not yet having received information of the "T" Force attack then in progress, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, in compliance with the orders issued by CinC, Combined Fleet about an hour before, issued his orders for the next day's operations. He directed the SIXTH Base Air Force to carry out a general pursuit attack and destroy the remaining enemy. Specifically he ordered (a) the air units at Takao and Tainan to launch a 400 mile search from Garan Bi commencing at 0600 between bearings 055°(T) and 116°(T) and (b) the remaining strength in that area to form the attack unit. He also ordered the air units at Shinchiku, Taichu and Ishigaki to carry out a search sweep and to execute an attack if possible.\*\*\*\*

At the same time, in support of the all-out pursuit-attack operations of the forces on Formosa, he ordered the "T" Force and all remaining SIXTH Base Air Force strength on Kyushu to attack as ordered by the respective commanders. In addition, he ordered pre-dawn searches

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\* Detailed Action Reports of 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944 - January 1945, WDC Document 160364 NA 12357.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 9, 708th Attack Unit, Night Torpedo Attack on Enemy Task Force off Formosa, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141902, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 54) WDC Document 160364.



from Okinawa augmented, as necessary, by aircraft from Kyushu, the latter searches to be made as ordered by the responsible commander in Kyushu. The only specific sector which Commander SIXTH Base Air Force ordered searched was from Okinawa where he directed Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla to cover the sector 157°-213°(T).\* He did not specify the range, but the bearings covered the area in which TF 38 would probably be found on the next day. As already noted, these orders which directed maximum exploitation of the success already believed attained in attacks against TF 38 were sound.

Details of the attacks of the other units of the "T" Force, namely the 703rd Attack Unit and the NINETY-EIGHTH Air Regiment are not available to this study. Presumably their attack took place at about this same time. The final attack of the day was made by one of two two-engine land bombers of the 501st Attack Unit which had departed from Tainan on Formosa at about 1820. One of these planes had failed to return. The other, at 2024 operating singly, had sighted an enemy escort carrier in Latitude 22°-38'N, Longitude 123°-00'E which it sank with its single torpedo.\*\* This attack was actually made on the HOUSTON Group (HOUSTON, CCWELL, BOYD) which at 2024 opened fire on approaching aircraft. Two minutes later these aircraft retired having inflicted no damage.\*\*\* There were no carriers in the HOUSTON Group which, at this time, was actually about sixty miles east of the position reported by the Japanese aircraft.

At about 2030 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received a revised estimate of the damage inflicted on TF 38 by the "T" Force on October 12th and 13th from the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet at Hiyoshi. This officer informed all flag officers that, on the 12th, the "T" Force had sunk six to eight carriers including three to four regular carriers (CV's) and on the 13th it had sunk three to five carriers including two to three regular carriers (CV's). In addition several other vessels were sunk or damaged.\*\*\*\* This estimate of the 12th represented an upward revision from the previous estimate of the Chief of Staff of more than six ships sunk or set afire and now exceeded the original pilots' claims of four carriers sunk. The estimate for the 13th tended to confirm the pilots' reports of three carriers sunk and two afire although the estimate claims were in general higher than these reports. What Commander SIXTH Base Air Force thought of this estimate of damage is not known. If he had doubted his pilots' reports and had considered

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141802, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 53) FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.

\*\* Detailed Action Report 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944-January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 14th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 142003, October 14th, 1944, WDC Document 161638.



them overoptimistic, as he evidently did,\* he now probably dismissed such doubts since the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet, with all the facilities of Fleet Headquarters and also Imperial General Headquarters available for evaluation, had now more than concurred in the original pilots' claims. However it seems clear that he must have considered the Chief of Staff's evaluation considerably exaggerated since his claims were well beyond any claims heretofore made by his pilots. Whether or not he thought that the Naval General Staff was expanding the claims for psychological purposes is not known.

Probably at about this same time he learned that, as on the previous day, the efforts of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and CG, FOURTH Air Army in the Philippines to join in the attack on TF 38 had been abortive. No large scale attack had been attempted by those commanders but a token attack of ten aircraft had been launched at 1430. These planes had been unable to locate a target and had landed on Formosa.\*\*

By about 2200 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force should have had available fairly complete reports of the "T" Force attack. He knew that his pilots, in this attack, claimed the following results: sunk - one large carrier, one small carrier, one escort carrier, one battleship, one heavy cruiser; probably sunk - one battleship, one small carrier, two light cruisers; damaged - one battleship. He also knew that, with the exception of one battleship and one escort carrier sunk and one battleship damaged, all of these claims had been made by pilots of the NINETY-EIGHTH Air Regiment. Of the forty planes of the attack unit, exclusive of reconnaissance planes, twenty-six failed to return. Of approximately ten reconnaissance planes three were lost.\*\*\* Total losses were approximately sixty per cent of the aircraft involved. There is no indication in the data available of the losses sustained by the previous attacks of Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla.

Reviewing the claims made by pilots during the entire day it is possible that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force now believed that his forces had sunk three carriers, had probably sunk a fourth, and had damaged but four carriers. However, it seems doubtful that he did so since the majority of the claims had been made by the NINETY-EIGHTH Air Regiment which, with its fifteen torpedo planes, constituted but twenty-nine per cent of the "T" Force attack group of fifty-two planes and yet claimed the successes gained against seven of the ten targets. It also

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\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 115, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN, page 501.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



seems doubtful since the NINETY-EIGHTH Air Regiment, although trained with the "T" Force, was presumably not considered on a par with the naval units of the "T" Force. The Japanese Navy, at this time, did not consider that Army flyers, in general, were as good as Navy flyers (a) because of "inter-service rivalry and discords,"\* and the difference in military concepts which seems to occur in many military establishments where, to quote Commander Mobile Force in 1945: "I sometimes felt the difficulty in getting decisions was because the Army had their trend of thought which is different from the Navy, and we had a hard time to get over that discrepancy,"\*\* (b) because, owing to the differences in the cruising radius of Army and Navy aircraft, coordinated operations, particularly in sea warfare, were relatively ineffective. In the "T" Force the Army appears to have flown K1-67's and the Navy, two-engine land bombers. The characteristics of the Navy plane were greatly superior to the K1-67,\* and (c) because the problem was almost entirely naval. The naval command felt that units trained entirely in overwater operations should be better than those only partially so trained. In fact, in 1945, Commander Mobile Force stated, "that it was true (referring to the beginning of the war) that Navy pilots were appreciably superior to the Army, and that was due to the training; the Navy training was much more severe and thorough than the Army."\*\* That this idea persisted as late as October 1944 seems clear when it is considered that in 1945, when discussing the relative quality of the Army and Navy pilots at the time of the Battle for Leyte Gulf, a senior staff officer (aviator) who was on duty at Imperial Headquarters during this time stated "after the Navy suffered losses (referring to the Battle off Formosa) I feel that we became about the equal of the Army."\*\*\*

If he did believe that his pilots had sunk and damaged the Allied shipping claimed then the pilots' figure for the three days was ten carriers sunk, one probably sunk, and six damaged for a total of seventeen. These included two which had been identified as escort carriers. The pilots' claims were less than those of Tokyo whose figure, based on their evaluations of October 12th and 13th, was between twelve and seventeen carriers sunk, four carriers damaged - a total of sixteen to twenty-one. As previously noted he had already issued his orders to continue the air offensive on the following day against the remnants of the retiring task force. He saw no need to change his plans although he may have wondered whether his aircraft would find any undamaged carriers to attack, since the number of carriers sunk or damaged was

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\* USSBS Japanese Air Weapons and Tactics Military Analysis Division 1947, page 3.

\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 55, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, IJN, Vol I, page 225.

\*\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 112, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Captain Genda, IJN, Vol II, page 496.



approximately equal or greater than the total carrier strength reported to have been within TF 38.

(2) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force,  
October 14th.

During the morning of October 14th Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, in addition to launching his searches, prepared to launch another attack against the enemy task force operating to the southeast of Formosa. This he had been ordered to do by Commander Southwest Area Fleet on the 12th but, as already noted, his attack launched on the 13th in cooperation with CG, FOURTH Air Army had been abortive. His first consideration now was to reconcentrate his planes preparatory to attack. Having been scattered after encountering bad weather the day before they were presently located at bases in Luzon and Formosa.

At about 0845 he knew that enemy carrier-type fighters had attacked Aparri. At about the same time he knew of the contacts made at 0750 and 0820 by aircraft of SIXTH Base Air Force, which indicated that two task groups were operating about 300 miles north of Aparri. What his reaction was to the attack on his northern base is not known. He had received a similar attack three days before and it had proved only a diversion. Unlike the earlier attack, however, this one indicated a dawn launching from the enemy carriers and Commander FIFTH Base Air Force knew that this was the usual practice of the enemy task force when it planned a full day of air strikes. By now he also knew that his short-range searches were on their return legs and had reported no contacts. His long-range search would not reach its outer limit until about 1300, but it covered only the area to the northeast of Luzon and not to the north. He apparently took no action to augment his searches to cover the area to the north.

Actually CTG 38.4, who had made the attack, was operating to the west of the area searched from the Philippines. The Japanese search had been devised to detect enemy forces moving toward the Philippines from the east with no attempt to detect those moving from the north. This was doubtless done on the assumption that any force moving south from the Formosa area would be tracked, in accordance with existing instructions, by air units based on Formosa. This was not done and therefore CTG 38.4 was enabled to move undetected to a position about 110 miles to the north and east of Luzon in an area not covered in the Philippine search plan. In the afternoon CTG 38.4 did move to the eastward into the area covered by a Philippine short-range search. This search, however, had been designed to give early morning protection only and to reach its limit at about 0700. It had therefore returned to base many hours before CTG 38.4 entered the searched area. Apparently Commander FIFTH Base Air Force was not concerned with the weakness of his search plan for no action was taken to strengthen it after the attack of CTG 38.4.



Possibly Commander FIFTH Base Air Force considered this strike to have been a long-range attack launched by the task groups already sighted to the north. He may have been overly influenced by the reports of damage already inflicted on the enemy task force by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force and believed that not more than two task groups could remain of the enemy task force. He may have also considered that, since little damage had been incurred at Aparri - only five planes had been destroyed and all of these on the ground,\* and this was not a large facility - it was more important for him to direct his full effort to preparing his command to attack the task groups off Formosa in the afternoon. This action of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force is not considered sound for had he properly appraised the destruction objective contained in his assigned task - to destroy the two enemy task groups off Formosa - he would have seen that this destruction objective did not confine itself to the two task groups referred to but was equally applicable to any other carrier task group within range since that would contribute equally to the over-all objective "the safeguarding of the Japanese line of communications with their vital southern resources." Therefore, is it not clear that he should properly have conducted immediate searches to ascertain the characteristics and location of the task group which had struck Aparri since, if it was nearer than the two task groups off Formosa and was an equally suitable target - it was highly probable that it was - this task group automatically became his correct physical objective and its destruction his primary objective?

At about 1130 Commander FIFTH Base Air Force was probably informed of the contact made at 1055 by a Shinchiku search plane. This plane reported two enemy surface ships in Latitude 19°-56'N, Longitude 122°-58'E.\*\* This position was about 110 miles northeast of Aparri. Although no carriers were reported, it must have appeared to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force that this was very possibly a partial sighting of the group that had attacked Aparri. There is no indication that he took any action to develop this contact. He presumably continued to ready his units to attack in cooperation with CG, FOURTH Air Army the task groups operating off Formosa.

By 1430, with the time limit for launching a daylight attack approaching, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force probably learned from CG, FOURTH Air Army - both of their headquarters were in Manila - that that commander was unable to launch an attack on this day. The FOURTH Air Army had encountered difficulty in reassembling its aircraft units after their abortive attack of the day before, and was not ready. Commander FIFTH Base Air Force had experienced similar difficulty but

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\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 14th, 1944.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit 762nd Air Group, Searches and Patrols of F's (Shinohiku) Sector, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.



had readied a token attack group of two carrier-type reconnaissance planes and eight carrier-type fighters. These he launched with orders to attack the task groups off Formosa.\*

Thereafter, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force continued to watch the changing situation off Formosa and to ready his command for future action. He had received no further attacks on his northern bases and may have now decided that the morning attack had been intended only to provide flank protection to the defeated enemy task force which was now retreating from the Formosa area.

At about 1830 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch which confirmed that the enemy had been greatly damaged and was retiring and directed further attacks on the 15th by the base air forces.\*\* Presumably at this time he was already taking all possible action to be ready to attack on the following day.

At about this same time he learned that, as on the previous day, his attack, even though of only token forces, had been abortive and his ten planes had landed on Formosa without sighting the enemy.\* This must have been a disappointment to him for it marked the third day that he had failed to comply with the orders received on the 12th to attack the enemy task force. He may have consoled himself somewhat with the thought that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force likewise encountered similar difficulties since that officer had not launched a general attack until the 14th, although he had been ordered to attack on the 10th.\*\*\*

During the remainder of the evening Commander FIFTH Base Air Force bent every effort to insure that his command would be ready on the next day so that in cooperation with CG, FOURTH Air Army he could launch a successful attack.

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- \* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141808, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH, and SEVENTH Base Air Forces and Commander SECOND Striking Force, WDC Document 161005.
  - \*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 100930, October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force; Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 332, Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



## (d) Operations of CG, FOURTH Air Army, October 14th.

CG, FOURTH Air Army, like Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, was concerned with reassembling his air units following their abortive attack of the 13th. In addition, he presumably launched those searches for which, under his joint agreement with the Navy, he was responsible. Inasmuch as their headquarters were both in Manila, CG, FOURTH Air Army probably continued to maintain close liaison with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and discussed with him the changing situation off Formosa and plans for their cooperative efforts.

During the morning he was informed of the attack on Aparri and of the contacts made on groups of TF 38. Whether or not he felt that the attack on Aparri indicated an inadequacy in the searches being conducted is not known, but as the search was a primary responsibility of the Navy, he may have considered that any action on his part to augment the search to the north was inappropriate.

Sometime in the early afternoon it must have become clear to him that his units had been delayed in reconcentrating from the previous days' attacks for he had to cancel any plans for an attack on this day.\*

Thereafter he continued to reassemble his aircraft while watching the situation off Formosa and awaited the next day to launch an attack.

## (6) Operations on October 15th.

## (a) Operations of CinC, Combined Fleet

CinC, Combined Fleet probably spent the remainder of the night in restful slumber since the indications were impressive (a) that his air attacks had been very successful in that they had succeeded in sinking thirteen to seventeen enemy ships, mostly carriers and (b) that TF 38 was definitely retiring. In addition, the SECOND Striking Force would presently (0700) pass through Bungo Suido en route to the area east of Formosa to destroy damaged enemy ships. He had now but to await the attacks which he had ordered for this day. It will be remembered that at 1808 on the previous day he had ordered his base air forces and his SECOND Striking Force, "to destroy the remaining enemy with all forces at their command" \*\* and since that time he knew that his "T" Force had attacked most successfully on the previous evening. He also knew that his Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had ordered the "T"

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141808, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH, SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces, (CinC, Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd 8), WDC Document 161005.



Force and the remaining SIXTH Base Air Force strength in Kyushu to attack in support of the all-out pursuit attack operations of his forces on Formosa,\* which latter forces with those of the FIFTH Base Air Force on Formosa had been ordered to participate in the general offensive.\*\*

At about 0700 he was probably convinced, if at any previous time he had had doubts, that he was winning the air action, for whereas on previous mornings Allied aircraft had struck Formosa before 0700 and more nearly at 0640, today there had been no strikes whatsoever. Where were the enemy task groups? He awaited reports from his search planes which he knew were searching from Okinawa, Kyushu, Formosa, and the Philippines.

At about 0830 he received a contact report (source not identified, but likely Army aircraft from the Philippines)\*\*\* that an enemy task group consisting of four carriers had at 0800 been sighted bearing 066°(T) distant 240 miles from Manila.\*\*\*\* This was TG 38.4. This contact probably did not surprise him since at 1055 the previous morning an Allied surface force had been observed about 110 miles northeast of Aparri but the fact that it consisted of four carriers may have surprised him since the Aparri attack had been on a small scale and had not been repeated, thereby giving indications of but one or two carriers. Whether he considered that this new contact was the same group observed at 1055 or, instead, had decided, in view of the four undamaged carriers, that this was an entirely new task group is not known. But whether he thought that it was a new task group or an old one is not so important as the fact that, instead of retiring, it was evidently closing Luzon and was preparing to launch an air strike against that island. Perhaps at this moment he had commenced to wonder if his estimates of the previous days' accomplishments had been correct, since the boldness of the Allied commander and the four evidently undamaged carriers, lent an air of doubt to the claims of the Japanese pilots. Certainly, if his reports were to be believed, between thirteen and seventeen carriers had been sunk and yet the composition of TF 38 had been

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141902, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (Commander SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 53) FEC Historical Division, Microfilm unnumbered.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 150505, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (Commander SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 55) FEC Historical Division, Microfilm unnumbered.

\*\*\* Philippine Air Operations, Phase II, 1944-1945, First Demobilization Bureau Monograph, Japanese Government, October 1946, Vol. 46, Part I (Col. Matsumae, ex-IJA), paragraph III A 1.

\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October, 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



reported on October 11th as only sixteen carriers!\*

It would be intensely interesting to know whether at this point CinC, Combined Fleet gave consideration to the fact that the presence of this carrier task group was in accordance with previous Japanese estimates pertaining to possible future Allied operations. If he did so he must have been struck by the similarity between the present Allied carrier strikes and those forecast. As has been pointed out previously the Japanese had forecast that the Allies would, prior to launching invasion operations, employ the major part of their carrier-based aircraft to destroy the Japanese air strength in southern Kyushu, Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Philippines. While the Allies had not struck southern Kyushu they had struck Nansei Shoto and Formosa and now were about to attack the Philippines. CinC, Combined Fleet may well have wondered whether this carrier task group was alone, or whether there were other groups in the vicinity. He also may well have wondered whether an amphibious landing was about to occur since that had been forecast. If he did then the fact that he had received no further intelligence concerning the Allied amphibious forces observed in the Hollandia-Wadke area on October 9th must have given him serious concern.

At about 0930 he likely received a contact on a carrier dead in the water, made by search attack group from Formosa.\*\*

At about 1000 he received a 0930 contact report on an entirely different group making almost no headway and trailing oil slicks. This group consisted of eleven ships, apparently destroyers, and bearing 098°(T) distant 260 miles from Takao.\*\*\* It was, of course, TG 30.3 which was composed, at this time, of the damaged CANBERRA in tow of the tug MUNSEE, and escorted by SANTA FE, BIRMINGHAM, MOBILE, COGSWELL, CAPERTON, INGERSOLL, THE SULLIVANS, STEPHAN POTTER and by the light carrier CABOT, a total of eleven ships. What CinC, Combined Fleet thought of this group is nowhere stated. Perhaps he thought that some of the Allied destroyers had been damaged and were being escorted from the combat area; more likely he thought that this was all that remained of one of the Allied carrier task groups, and that the others had retired after suffering heavy losses.

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\* DESRON 10 Action Report SHO Operations, October 17th-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, Operations in SHO Operations, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December, 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



Also at about this same time, 1000, he knew, since he still had his headquarters at the Shinchiku Air Base, that about twenty planes had departed Shinchiku to attack the above destroyers.\*

At about 1100 he most likely heard the results of the expected strike by the Allied carrier task force (TG 38.4) on Luzon. The air attack group, which struck the Manila area at about 1025, reportedly consisted of about eighty fighters and bombers. The Japanese did not consider that the strike had been particularly effective for they claimed having intercepted the attack group with fifty fighters\* (both Army and Navy, but under Army control)\*\* and having shot down twenty-seven planes and having damaged five, losing but one plane and that on the ground.\* Whether CinC, Combined Fleet accepted such claims at face value is not known, but it would appear not, for, at no time since October 10th, had his base air forces succeeded in being so successful. Heretofore his planes had always suffered heavy losses. Were his FIFTH Base Air Force and the FOURTH Air Army so much better than the SIXTH Base Air Force including the "T" Force?

At about 1115 he appears to have received word that twenty-five fighters, six of which were armed with bombs, had sortied from Luzon fields, had attacked the carrier group reported at 0800 off northeast Luzon at the very moment (1040) when it was launching planes (it was launching fighters to oppose the attack), and had obtained one direct hit on a battleship or cruiser, and a near miss on a large carrier. He could not have been very impressed with this result, even though he knew that the air attack group was probably a heterogeneous collection of planes, since the carriers which were the principal targets of Japanese aircraft had escaped damage. Actually this Japanese attack made one bomb hit on the FRANKLIN, but the damage was slight. CinC, Combined Fleet now awaited word as to the further operations of this Allied carrier task group. When and where would it strike?

Also about this time he learned that the Shinchiku attack group of twenty planes which had departed that base to attack the eleven destroyers (TG 30.3) had failed to locate that task group.\*

At about 1205 he knew that operations in the Formosa area were proceeding satisfactorily for, at that time, he received a dispatch from Commander SIXTH Base Air Force to the SIXTH Base Air Force wherein that commander (a) advised his command that the enemy task force which

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* 4th Air Army Plans for SHO One, Papers of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer 4th Air Army, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.



had been reported at 0930, was, at 1010, in Latitude 22°-05'N, Longitude 124°-55'E, and that it was not composed of destroyers alone, but instead included two carriers, (b) directed all forces to make repeated attacks.\* Evidently Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had received an additional contact report which is not available to this study, for the composition of this group was more nearly correct although there was but one carrier, the CABOT, with this group at this time. CinC, Combined Fleet now had reports of three carriers off Formosa.

At 1237 he received an additional dispatch from Commander SIXTH Base Air Force amplifying his 1205 dispatch to the extent of giving the enemy speed as slow, his course as 080°(T), and directing the base air forces on Okinawa and Kyushu to attack repeatedly.

Sometime about 1445, the exact time being indeterminate, he received a contact, source not known, which indicated that there was but one carrier in the two carrier task group, for a composite intelligence estimate at 1500 reported but one carrier in this group, and also reported that there was a strong probability of an additional carrier or carriers with two battleships bearing 068°(T) distant 155 miles from Garan Bi.\*\* Thus, this composite report showed the probability of but two carriers off Formosa. This is the same number shown in the notes at this time (about 1500) of the staff officer previously referred to at Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Headquarters.\*\*\*

He also received a report that four additional carriers and several other ships had been sighted on bearing 055°(T) distant 600 miles from Manila.\*\* This report, source also unknown, is likewise shown in the composite report as well as in the staff officer's notes.

He now knew that there were probably two carriers off Formosa, and eight carriers off Luzon - a total of ten carriers.

At about 1500 he had reason to believe that an attack group from Okinawa was en route to attack the enemy task force off Formosa in Latitude 22°-05'N, Longitude 124°-55'E, since such an attack group had

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 151205, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (Commander SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 56) WDC Document 160358 NA 12592.

\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 0900, October 1944 to SECOND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



been ordered to depart Oroku at 1330.\* He probably noted that the instructions to this group gave merely the 0930 position of this group and did not give course and speed. The reason for this was, of course, the fact that the group was reportedly making almost no headway - which was a correct estimate - the speed being about three and one-half knots.

At about 1600 the Oroku air attack group which had departed about 1330 attacked TG 38.1. The pilots claimed having crashed into an enemy carrier with two fighter-bombers with unreported results.\*\* Actually, whereas one or two planes did succeed in breaking through the combat air patrol, and did attack the carriers, no hits were made.

At about 1630 he likely received the report of the results obtained by the second strike made on TG 38.4 by Luzon-based planes of the FIFTH Base Air Force and the FOURTH Air Army.\*\*\* This strike, which was composed of about ninety fighters and bombers, departed Clark Field at 1400, attacked TG 38.4 at about 1530 and reported having sunk one large carrier (CV), set the flight decks of two carriers afire, damaged one cruiser, and shot down over twenty Allied fighter planes. It is also likely that, in this dispatch, he learned (a) that its 1530 position was well to the eastward of the 0800 position, and (b) of the death of the commander of the TWENTY-SIXTH Air Flotilla, and of Clark Air Base,\*\*\*\* who had died by crashing his torpedo plane into a carrier. Whether CinC, Combined Fleet realized it or not this action of the Commander TWENTY-SIXTH Air Flotilla was the forerunner of the Japanese Special Attack Units - the so-called Kamikaze Units - which were subsequently organized.\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet accepted the pilot claims of one carrier sunk.\*\*\*\*\*

Also at about 1630 he probably learned (a) that a third and fourth strike had departed Manila to attack the retiring Allied carrier task group which had been attacked twice that day,\*\*\* and (b) that a strike of six land attack planes and six fighter planes had departed Formosa.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 151423, October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, CinC, Combined Fleet, etc., WDC Document 160137.

\*\* War Diary 653rd Air Group, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160295 NA 12530.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\* Rear Admiral Masabumi Arima, IJN.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 152035, October 1944 to Combined Fleet; War Diary 61st Air Flotilla, WDC Document 161643.

\*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, Operations in SHO Operations, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



Sometime during the late afternoon it seems possible that CinC, Combined Fleet was advised by his Chief of Staff - although there is no record of such a dispatch - that a reconnaissance made that day of the Admiralty Islands (presumably Seeadler Harbor, Manus Island) had discovered there four carriers (including two CV and one CVE), three battleships, four cruisers, thirteen destroyers, twenty transports and about twenty medium sized aircraft.\* What the source of this intelligence was is not stated, but it was quite incorrect since at this time (October 15th) there were no large carriers and no battleships anywhere in the Admiralty Islands. This, of course, was not known to CinC, Combined Fleet. One escort carrier, the MAKASSAR STRAIT, was present in Seeadler Harbor.

If he received this dispatch, despite the four additional carriers reported 600 miles northeast of Manila, it probably reassured him as to the prospects of an immediate landing for the following reasons: (a) this powerful force was anchored in the Admiralty Islands and therefore far away (1400 miles) from the southern Philippine Islands and was showing no signs of imminent departure, (b) many of the carriers of TF 38 had been destroyed or damaged, (c) the remaining carrier task groups were widely dispersed and, in most cases, retiring, (d) no further reports had been received concerning the large transport force in the Hollandia-Wakde area and (e) the carrier task group (TG 38.4) which had been attacked off Luzon that day was retiring after suffering heavy damage.

If such was the estimate of CinC, Combined Fleet it was strongly supported by his Chief of Staff at Hiyoshi and hence by the Naval General Staff at Tokyo for at 2035 the Chief of Staff in the name of CinC, Combined Fleet advised the commanders of the base air forces and of the SW Area as follows:

"As a result of our intense and sustained attacks, the main strength of the enemy task force east of Formosa faces complete destruction. In addition, the enemy group which fled toward the Philippines was attacked today by FIFTH Base Air Force, resulting in the destruction of one carrier while the rest of the group barely escaped.

"The tide of battle can be turned and the way paved toward complete victory only by continuing to pursue and attack the enemy. Therefore, although they have already put forth great effort, the base air forces must seize the present opportunity and carry on their intrepid

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\* Material for Situation Estimates, First Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (microfilm).



and resolute general offensive without relaxation, thus advancing on to certain victory.\*\*

Some time after this but most likely around 2130 CinC, Combined Fleet learned that both attack groups which had departed at about 1630, one from Manila, the other from Formosa had returned to base without having contacted the enemy.

As midnight approached he knew that at 2300 a radar equipped flying boat had departed Toko (Takao) to make a night search southeast of Garan Bi to a distance of about 300 miles,\*\* and that plans were underway to continue the attacks on the following day. Principal among these were orders directing:\*\*\*

(a) Forces in the Kyushu and Okinawa area to attack repeatedly the enemy force retiring in Latitude 22°-05'N, Longitude 124°-55'E.

(b) Forces in Formosa to be ready after 0600 to take off on thirty minutes notice to attack the enemy referred to in (a) above.

He likely knew also, although there are no dispatches available to this study to support this conclusion, that the submarines I-45, I-54 and I-56 had departed Inland Sea for operations against TF 38. These three, with the submarine I-26 which had departed Kure two days earlier, would give him four submarines.\*\*\*\* He probably wondered what had delayed the departure of these submarines from Kure, and realized that it would be some days before even these four would be able to contribute to his operations.

(b) Operations of Commander Mobile Force, October 15th.

Commander Mobile Force during October 15th took no important action, except perhaps to follow the activities of Commander SECOND Striking Force.

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 152035, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, CinC, SW Area Force and Commander Kanoya Air Base, War Diary 61st Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643.

\*\* Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group Night Searches, October 10th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551 NA 12402.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 151237, October 1944 (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 57) WDC Document 160258; Dispatch 151855, October 1944 (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 59) WDC Document 160137; Dispatch 152255, October 1944 (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 62) FEC Historical Division, Microfilm unnumbered.

\*\*\*\* Submarine Operations 1944, Merit Rating Reports for Naval Ship Units, WDC Document 161011, also Submarine Operations in Philippine Waters, 1944-1945, Department of Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-15.



(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force,  
October 15th.

Commander FIRST Striking Force, who was closely observing the operations of the base air forces against TF 38 and who continued to feel that an invasion was inevitable, continued his preparations for battle. Since he had directed his command to be ready in all respects for battle by the evening of October 15th this required considerable effort. One important operation was fueling, and most of this day was occupied by this.

As stated previously Commander FIRST Striking Force expected to complete fueling all his units at Lingga during the 15th.\* Information available does not indicate the means of fueling all FIRST Striking Force units but apparently the destroyers and some cruisers were fueled from battleships which, in turn were fueled from tankers and barges, as follows:

(a) CRUDIV FIVE\*\* - MYOKO, HAGURO, MOGAMI from oil barge HAYATOMO (formerly a fleet oiler but so damaged as to be unable to go to sea).

(b) CRUDIV SEVEN\*\*\* - TONE, SUZUYA from oiler FUKUAN MARU, CHIKUMA from YAMATO, and KUMANO from MUSASHI.

(c) CRUDIV SIXTEEN - AOBA, KINU and URANAMI evidently fueled at Singapore Naval Base where they were having new radars installed.

(d) DESRON TWO - less NOSHIRO which evidently fueled at the Singapore Naval Base, were probably fueled by battleships.

(e) DESRON TEN\*\*\*\* - except ISOKAZE which evidently fueled at Singapore Naval Base prior to her departure for Lingga that day; from the MUSASHI.

The fueling of these ships was not a very serious operation since Commander FIRST Striking Force, during the preceding days, had endeavored to keep his ships fully fueled. Therefore this day's fueling was, in general, a simple "topping off" procedure. However, it has been included here to show that Japanese practices in this regard

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\* CofS SECOND Fleet Dispatch 142250, War Diary BATDIV 1,  
October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\* War Diary CRUDIV 5, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\* War Diary CRUDIV 7, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\*\* COMDESRON 10 Dispatch 150600, DESRON 10, Detailed Action Report,  
October 17th-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161005.



closely approximated our own, and to point out that the practices of first class navies in matters of this kind are often quite similar.

By evening the FIRST Striking Force was, in general, ready for battle in accordance with Chief of Staff, FIRST Striking Force's dispatch\* of the previous evening and the exceptions contained in this dispatch still obtained for (a) CRUDIV SIXTEEN was still at Singapore where the work on its radars was being rushed or curtailed; the NOSHIRO was also still at Singapore; the ISOKAZE had returned to Lingga; and the HAYASHIMO and AKISHIMO were en route to Manila.

About 2100 Commander FIRST Striking Force received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch\*\* of 2035 that evening wherein that Commander (a) advised his command of the imminent destruction of the Allied carrier force off Formosa and of the successful attack on the task group observed off Luzon that morning and (b) directed the base air forces to seize the present opportunity and complete the destruction.

From his actions it does not appear that Commander FIRST Striking Force fully accepted the ideas advanced in the above dispatch. On the contrary the evidence indicates that he never wavered in his conviction that there would be landing in the southern Philippines and therefore prepared himself and his command to that end. He awaited the activation of SHO One.

The above actions of Commander FIRST Striking Force are considered to have been correct and logical. This is particularly so when it is realized that, by preparing for battle, he was in no way acting contrary to CinC, Combined Fleet's plans, but was instead placing himself in position to promptly support these plans should he be called upon to do so. In other words should Imperial General Headquarters order full activation of SHO One, or should CinC, Combined Fleet suddenly order the FIRST Striking Force to sea as he had suddenly ordered the SECOND Striking Force, he, Commander FIRST Striking Force, would be ready. By so doing he was giving an excellent example of mutual understanding wherein without specific instructions, he was acting constructively as his immediate superior, had he been present, would have wished him to act.

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\* CofS, FIRST Striking Force Dispatch 142250, October 1944 to CofS, Combined Fleet, etc. War Diary BATDIV 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 152035, October 1944 to Commander FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, CinC, SW Area Force and Commander Kanoya Air Base, War Diary 61st Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643.



## (2) Operations of Commander Main Force, October 15th.

Commander Main Force during this day took no important action. He continued conducting training and preparing for sortie should he be called upon to sortie. He appears to have maintained his ships fueled and therefore during this day the OYODO was fueled at Tokuyama.\* Meanwhile the SHIMOTSUKI arrived at Kagoshima\*\* and the TAMA, MOMI, HINOKI, KAYA and KASHI arrived at Iwakuni\*\*\* where the latter two were to assist in the shore basing of the 634th Air Group. The SUGI remained at Kure.

## (3) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force, October 15th.

Commander SECOND Striking Force\*\*\*\* departed Iwakuni at midnight in accordance with his prearranged plans and headed for Bungo Suido. He had with him CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE (NACHI(FF), ASHIGARA) the light cruiser ABUKUMA(F) and three destroyers of DESRON ONE. These three were the AKEBONO and USHIO comprising DESDIV SEVEN, and the SHIRANUHI of DESDIV EIGHTEEN. The KASUMI, the other destroyer of DESDIV EIGHTEEN, which had been at Kure rejoined Commander SECOND Striking Force before reaching Bungo Suido. COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE with DESDIV TWENTY-ONE (WAKABA(F), HATSUSHIMO, HATSUHARU) departed Kure at 0330 and headed for Bungo Suido planning to rejoin Commander SECOND Striking Force at sea as soon as practicable. However, owing to failure to receive a radio message from Commander SECOND Striking Force, COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE missed the rendezvous for that day and was not able to rejoin until the following evening.\*\*\*\*\*

At 0730 Commander SECOND Striking Force with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE, ABUKUMA, DESDIV SEVEN and DESDIV EIGHTEEN passed through Bungo Suido and into the Pacific.\*\*\*\*\*

Although he did not know it, he was contacted at 0746 by the submarine BESUGO off Bungo Suido in Latitude 32°-30'N, Longitude 132°-36'E, which contact, owing to the fact that the BESUGO remained submerged until nightfall, was not reported to COMTHIRDFLT until about 1930 that evening.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* War Diary OYODO, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161636 NA 11973.

\*\* War Diary DESRON 10, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 11, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161715 NA 12712.

\*\*\*\* Vice Admiral Kiyohide Shima, IJN.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944, also BESUGO Dispatch 151014, October 1944 to COMSUBPAC.



At about 1107 COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE who, with DESDIV TWENTY-ONE, had passed through Bungo Suido at about 1050 was sighted in Latitude 32°-34'N, Longitude 132°-39'E while on a southeasterly course at about twenty knots, by the BESUGO. This contact likewise was not reported by the BESUGO until about 1930 when she surfaced after nightfall.\* The fact that he had been contacted by a submarine was unknown to COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE.

Commander SECOND Striking Force continued without incident on generally southerly courses during the day passing at noon through Latitude 31°-26'N, Longitude 133°-00'E.\*\*

At 1725 he advised his command by visual signal that (a) "From 0400 tomorrow the force will be within patrol range of B-24's based on Saipan. From 0600 to 0900 enforce No. 2 anti-aircraft alert. After 0600 enforce No. 2 radar alert. (b) After 1900 today be prepared to make twenty-one knots immediately and twenty-four knots on thirty minutes notice. After 0500 tomorrow be prepared to make twenty-four knots immediately. (c) After 1730 today use extra-short wave twenty-one megacycles (presumably radio telephone for interforce communication)\*\*\*

The remainder of the evening until 2400 was uneventful. At 2400 the SECOND Striking Force was in Latitude 28°-30'N, Longitude 132°-20'E. DESDIV TWENTY-ONE was to the north and west of this position.

(c) Operations of the Base Air Forces on October 15th.

(1) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force awaited dawn to launch his searches and attack groups in anticipation of completing the destruction of the retiring enemy task force. It will be recalled that he had already ordered a continuation of the general offensive and had directed his forces on Formosa and in southern Kyushu to attack. He had also ordered that aircraft landing in Formosa and the Nansei Shoto after attacks on the 14th be concentrated prior to dawn at designated Formosa bases.

At about 0030 he learned that this latter order had not been carried out insofar as it concerned aircraft which had landed at Miyako and Ishigaki. At that time he discovered that Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air

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\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944; also BESUGO Dispatch 151014, October 1944, to COMSUBPAC.

\*\* War Diary ABUKUMA, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161636.

\*\*\* SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 151725, October 1944, (SECOND Striking Force DesOpOrd 128) War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.



Flotilla at 2354 at Okinawa had ordered those aircraft, commencing at 0615, to be prepared to attack on fifteen minutes notice.\* Why the aircraft in the Nansei Shoto had not been concentrated as directed is not known. Perhaps it was due to bad weather which had caused Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla to delay their departure; perhaps it was due to his failure to receive the order to concentrate, since that order, although addressed to him, does not appear in his log. Whatever the cause, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force appears to have accepted this change, for he took no further action to concentrate these planes on Formosa.

While reestimating the situation during the early morning Commander SIXTH Base Air Force realized that his order for a general attack by units on Formosa required clarification since (a) the large influx of units which had landed on Formosa, after earlier attacks, might lead to some confusion in the command of those forces, and (b) some forces which were available on Formosa had been omitted in the order. To prevent the first possibility he ordered Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla at Shinchiku to command all units in the Shinchiku and Taichu areas, and placed the commanders of all units in the Tainan and Takao areas directly under himself.\*\* As regards the second point, at 0505 he directed all "T" Force and FIFTH Base Air Force strength on Formosa to join the forces at the nearest base and participate in the sustained general offensive.\*\*\* He did this because he realized (a) that his order to the "T" Force which had directed an additional attack from southern Kyushu, had been incomplete since most of that force was now on Formosa; and (b) because he knew that some aircraft of the FIFTH Base Air Force had also arrived on Formosa, ten planes having landed there during the previous evening after their failure to find TF 38.

During the dawn period between about 0545 and 0600, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force presumed that his searches were being launched as he had directed. Actually the searches launched were as follows:

(a) At 0545 Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla at Okinawa launched two two-engine land bombers to cover the area between 167°-188°(T) to a distance of 650 miles from Okinawa and three carrier-type reconnaissance planes to cover the adjacent sector between 188°-219°(T)

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 142354, October 1944 to Western Attack Force TWO, WDC Document 160137.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch (Date & Time Group unknown) October 15th, 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 50).

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 150505, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 55) FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.



to a distance of 400 miles from that base.\* This sector of 167°-219°(T) was slightly different from that which Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had ordered, namely 157°-213°(T).\*\* The reason for this discrepancy is not indicated in the data available.

(b) At 0600 a search group of three two-engine land bombers and three carrier-type attack planes took off from Kanoya. What sectors they were ordered to search is not indicated in the available data.\*\*\*

(c) At 0600 a search group took off from Tainan to search the sector 055°-116°(T) from Garan Bi to a distance of 400 miles.\*\*\*\* How many planes composed this group is not known.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force in his orders issued the previous evening had directed his forces in northern Formosa to carry out search-sweeps. There is no indication that any dawn search was launched, although the unit which had conducted searches from Shinchiku on previous days had seven aircraft available for search.\*\*\*\*\* Possibly Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla, who was in command of forces in this area, considered that the area of probable contact with the remnants of TF 38 was being adequately covered from Garan Bi and Okinawa and that he could best further his commander's plan by using all of his available aircraft to attack what targets were located by other searches. The searches launched from these other two bases did cover largely the same area which could be covered from Shinchiku. Inasmuch as Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla had only about twenty planes available to attack,\*\*\*\*\* his decision to hold this group in readiness, rather than dissipate it in covering a search sector, was sound. Presumably Commander SIXTH Base Air Force approved of this decision since no search was launched.

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 152107, October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141902, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 54) WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Reports of 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944-January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 6, 708th Attack Unit, 762nd Air Group, Searches and Patrols of F's (Shinchiku) Sector, October 1st-17th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



At 0645 a search-attack group comprising nine two-engine land bombers escorted by nine carrier type fighters departed from the Tainan-Takao area.\* This was in accordance with the orders of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force who had directed that a search and attack group should take off after the search planes had been launched and proceed on course 070°(T) for 130 miles from Garan Bi and then on course 110°(T) for about 300 miles.\*\*

At 0735 another search-attack group departed from Miyako. This group was composed of three carrier-type reconnaissance planes, five carrier-type fighters carrying bombs and ten escorting carrier-type fighters.\*\*\* Presumably this flight was ordered by Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla from Okinawa. Whether or not Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was informed of its departure is not known.

At about 0830 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received his first contact report of the day. This report stated that an enemy task group which included four carriers had been sighted at 0800 in Latitude 16°-15'N, Longitude 124°-32'E.\*\*\*\* The source of this contact is not indicated in the data available, but as the position was bearing 066°(T) 240 miles from Manila it was probably made by a Philippines search plane. The contact was actually on TG 38.4 which included four carriers and was at that time bearing 307°(T) forty miles from the position reported.

What Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's reaction to this contact was is not known, but it is assumed that they were similar to those discussed under CinC, Combined Fleet.

At 0830 a search-attack group of eighteen planes launched from Miyako at 0735, and which had proceeded southwest was intercepted by some thirty Allied fighters at a position bearing 210°(T) distant 120 miles from Miyako. During the ensuing air action the pilots reported having attacked an enemy task group composed of five carriers,

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 141902, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 54) WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 166th Fighter Unit (653rd Air Group) SHO Operations, October 14th-21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004.

\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



three battleships, and several other ships, with undetermined results due to intense AA fire and fighter interception.\* They also reported that they had shot down three enemy fighters while losing one carrier-type attack-plane, one fighter-bomber, and five escorting fighters.\*\*

This attack had been made on TG 38.1 which comprised at this time four carriers, two anti-aircraft cruisers, and nine destroyers. The CAP of this task group had intercepted the approaching attack so successfully that no enemy planes had been sighted by the ships of TG 38.1. In making this interception the CAP claimed having shot down six fighters and two two-engine land bombers, while losing no Allied fighters.\*\*\*

From the data available it seems clear that this contact was not received by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force at this time. Instead, most likely because of communication difficulties, its receipt was long delayed - possibly as will be shown later - until sometime during the following night.

At 0900 aircraft took off from Kanoya to search for the enemy task force commencing at 1115 from Minami Daito Jima.\*\*\*\* The number of planes or sectors to be searched are not known but presumably this was the search unit of an attack group which was to be launched later from southern Kyushu. Such an attack had been ordered by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.

At about 0930 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned of the attack made by his search-attack group which had departed from southern Formosa bases at 0645. Since but one of the eighteen planes of this search attack group had returned to base, the complete results achieved are not known.\*\*\*\*\* However, the single survivor reported having attacked a carrier dead in the water, but made no further claims regarding the results of this attack. What the actual target of this attack was is not clear, for no task group of TF 38 had been attacked at this time, and there were no carriers dead in the water. This attack group seems to have been the same group that had been intercepted at about 0900 by

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 166th Fighter Unit (653rd Air Group) SHO Operations, October 14th-21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 164th and 165th Fighter Units (653rd Air Group) SHO Operations, October 14th-21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004.

\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary 12th Reconnaissance Unit, Kanoya Detachment, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160381.

\*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



the CAP of TG 38.1. This view is supported by CTG 38.1 who reported that between 0900 and 0927 his CAP had shot down seven carrier-type reconnaissance planes and three carrier-type fighters,\* and that none of the enemy planes had been sighted visually by the task group.

At about 1000 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received another contact report. This report stated that, at 0930, eleven ships, apparently destroyers, making no headway and trailing oil,\*\* had been sighted in Latitude 22°-08'N, Longitude 124°-45'E. This sighting, which had been made by a search plane either from Garan Bi or Okinawa, occurred in an area covered by the searches from both bases. The group sighted was TG 30.3 which was comprised of eleven ships: four cruisers, one light carrier, five destroyers and one fleet tug. This group had not yet been joined by the HOUSTON Group; it was actually making a speed of about 3.5 knots and was about forty miles southwest of the position reported. About twenty aircraft from Shinchiku were ordered to attack this force.\*\*

Shortly after 1000 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force likely learned that at about 0930 Commander FIFTH Base Air Force and CG, FOURTH Air Army had launched an attack group consisting of twenty-five planes to attack the four-carrier task group which at 0800 had been sighted 240 miles northeast of Manila.

At about 1100 he also learned that the Manila area had been attacked at about 1025 by about eighty enemy aircraft. It seems clear that his mental processes concerning this attack and the fact that it might be the forerunner of an invasion were probably similar to those discussed under CinC, Combined Fleet and will therefore not be discussed here.

At about 1100 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that the attack group which had taken off from Shinchiku to attack the eleven ships which had been sighted at 0930 had failed to make contact due to interference from Allied fighters.\*\*\* Although TG 38.1 was actually, at this time, about twenty-four miles west of the position stated in the 0930 contact report it nevertheless seems correct to say that this was probably the group which had been intercepted by TG 38.1's CAP at 1033, and which CTG 38.1 claimed had lost six planes to that CAP.\* The data available does not indicate how many Japanese planes had failed to return.

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\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 15th, 1944.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



At about 1115 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force likely learned that the first attack from the Philippines had succeeded in scoring a direct hit on a battleship or cruiser and a near miss on a large carrier.\* Also at about this same time he was informed that the eleven ships reported at 0930 east of Formosa included two carriers. The source of this information is not known but it may have been contained in amplifying reports from pilots of the abortive Shinchiku attack. This revision of the original report of the composition of the group was partially correct, for as noted earlier there was one light carrier in the group at this time.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force now had contacts on three carriers off Formosa, the single one dead in the water and the two carriers included among the eleven ships retiring from the area.

At 1205 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force ordered all of his forces on Formosa to make repeated attacks on the enemy task force which had been originally sighted at 0930 and which he stated now included two carriers. In his order he indicated the 1010 position of this force as Latitude 22°-05'N, Longitude 124°-55'E.\*\* This was about ten miles east of the 0930 position and about forty miles northeast of the actual position of TG 30.3. At 1237 he issued the same order to make repeated attacks to his forces on Okinawa and Kyushu. In this order he indicated that the enemy force was on course 080°(T) at slow speed.\*\*\* Actually TG 30.3 was making a speed of about three and a half knots.

At about 1300 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that his commander on Okinawa - Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla - was taking immediate action in accordance with his attack orders. At this time that commander informed him that at about 1330 he would launch an attack against the enemy task group which included two carriers east of Formosa. This group would consist of thirty-six planes including five carrying torpedoes and would land at Miyako after the attack.\*\*\*\* This attack was actually launched prior to 1345 and comprised thirty-seven aircraft.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 151205, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 56) WDC Document 160258.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 151237, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 57) WDC Document 160258.

\*\*\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 151243, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECCND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army, Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



At about 1430 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force presumably learned that a second air attack had been launched from Philippine bases against the four-carrier group to the south. This attack comprised about ninety Army and Navy aircraft.\*

At 1445 Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla on Okinawa reported that at 1125 one of his search planes had sighted an enemy group composed of one large carrier, one medium carrier, one small carrier and eight cruisers and destroyers. The position of the sighting was Latitude 22°-45'N, Longitude 124°-45'E; the group was on course 090°(T) speed twelve knots. No airborne fighters were observed. Scattered squalls were reported in the vicinity.\*\* This was a sighting of TG 38.1 which at this time was composed of four carriers. The course and speed were correct\*\*\* but the position was about eighteen miles north of the actual position of TG 38.1. The reported position was about thirty-five miles north of the 1010 position of the two carrier group which he had ordered his forces to attack.

From the data available it seems clear that this contact, in a manner similar to the Miyako 0830 contact on five carriers, was not received by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force at this time. Instead also most likely because of communication difficulties its receipt was long delayed - possibly as will be shown later - until sometime during the following night.

About this time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received a contact, source not known, which indicated that there was but one carrier in the two carrier task group, for a composite intelligence estimate at 1500 reported but one carrier in this group, and also reported that there was a strong probability of an additional carrier or carriers with two battleships bearing 068°(T) distant 155 miles from Garan Bi.\*\*\*\* Thus, this composite report showed the probability of but two carriers off Formosa. This is the same number shown in the notes at this time (about 1500) of the staff officer previously referred to at Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Headquarters.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 151445, October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\* Deck Log, WASP, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 0900, October 1944 to SECOND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



He also received a report that an additional group of four carriers and several other ships had been sighted on bearing 055°(T) distant 600 miles from Manila.\* This report, source also unknown, is likewise shown in the composite report as well as in the staff officer's notes.

He now knew of two carriers off Formosa, and eight carriers off Luzon - a total of ten carriers.

Shortly after 1600 he knew that an attack group of twelve planes had departed from bases in southern Formosa. This group was composed of six land-attack planes escorted by six fighters.\*\* What enemy group these planes were to attack is not indicated.

Shortly thereafter he learned that this attack group had returned to base when the flight commander's plane developed engine trouble.\*\* This was a surprising performance since it indicated a complete breakdown in command. It was also a warning to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that the morale of his entire command was possibly deteriorating. It is clear that he realized the factors which were responsible for it. He knew for example that (a) his attack units were fatigued, and at least partially disorganized, as a result of continuous operations with very heavy losses, coupled with the redeployment of many units during the past few days (b) after previous attacks his attack units had not always landed at designated bases but had sometimes been scattered among several bases on Formosa and in the Nansei Shoto with the result that subsequent attack groups launched from those bases had not only been non-homogeneous but had been made up of detachments of several units (c) a lack of previous training together and the differences in unit attack procedures and in types of aircraft had reduced the effectiveness of his attack. He knew all of this and yet until this twelve plane unit had turned back, he had reason to believe that all other attack groups had either accomplished their missions or at least had attempted to do so. On the other hand he also knew that such conduct should not be permitted to go unpunished since "success is won not by personnel and material in prime condition but by the debris of an organization worn by the strain of campaign and shaken by the shock of battle."\*\*\* Therefore if he was to win his battle he must fight on, despite the fatigue and falling morale of his pilots, for who could tell but that many of the enemy pilots were likewise deteriorating in an equal or even more rapid manner. Unfortunately there is no material available to this study that indicates that he took any corrective measures whatsoever. Perhaps he left that to the commander of the unit concerned.

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\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 0900, October 1944, to SECOND Striking Force; War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Sound Military Decision, U.S. Naval War College, 1942, page 198.



At about 1630 he learned that all of the planes which had departed from Kanoya at 0900 to search for the enemy task force had returned to that base at 1555 having made no contact.\*

At about the same time he probably learned that the second attack group which had taken off from Clark Field in the Philippines at 1400 had attacked the four carrier enemy task group northeast of Manila between 1545 and 1600 and claimed sinking one carrier, setting afire the flight decks of two other carriers, and damaging a cruiser. This group also claimed shooting down twenty defending enemy fighters.\*\*

That he evaluated this attack as one carrier sunk, one probably sunk and one damaged is clear from the fact that on the following morning he referred to "more than six carriers off Luzon"\*\*\* which estimate could only have been obtained by assuming that the four carriers (CV) which had been observed 600 miles to the northeast were still there, and that the task group which had been attacked as stated above still consisted of at least two carriers.

At about 1700 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned of the attack made by planes which had departed from Okinawa. This attack group, although numbering only thirty-seven planes, was composed of aircraft from eight different units.\*\*\*\* These aircraft had been directed to attack the two-carrier enemy task group. The data available on this attack is not complete, but the following is believed to be reasonably correct, viz:

The attacking planes proceeded to the target area in three groups at an altitude of about 13,000 feet. The weather in that area at the time was scattered light rain showers, high overcast and low broken clouds at about 3,000 feet.\*\*\*\*\* Visibility was six to twelve miles. At least one of the attack groups was unable to locate any target and, after searching the area from 1530 until 1605, departed

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\* War Diary 12th Reconnaissance Unit, Kanoya Detachment, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160381.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 160821, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 63) War Diary 252nd Attack Group, October 15th-November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160258 NA 12592.

\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 15th 1944.



and landed at Miyako.\* At 1543 the attack groups were detected by radars in TG 38.1 at a range of sixty to seventy-one miles and interception by the CAP was commenced. During the ensuing forty-five minutes the attack groups were engaged by the CAP and all but a few planes were driven off or shot down. Of the few which broke through, one plane dropped its bomb off the starboard quarter of the HORNET causing no damage. This plane was shot down by AA fire after its attack. In this action CTG 38.1 claimed destroying eight planes by fighters and AA fire.\*\* Information available does not indicate how many Japanese planes failed to return nor what total claims of damage were made by those pilots who did return. A report was made, however, that two fighter-bombers had crashed into an enemy carrier.\*\*\* The carrier group attacked was, of course, not the two-carrier group (TG 30.3) as had been ordered, but was instead TG 38.1 which at this time was a three-carrier group, COWPENS having departed at 1400 to join TG 30.3.

At 1855 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force issued his orders for the next day. He directed units in southern Formosa to conduct dawn 400 mile searches and also to launch a search-attack group at 0645 to attack the enemy carriers and battleships dead in the water near Latitude 22°-05'N, Longitude 124°-55'E. Units in northern Formosa were directed to coordinate their operations with those of the units in the south. From Okinawa he ordered a search of the sector 157°-209°(T) from that base, range unspecified; from Kyushu he also ordered a search, although not specifying either sector or range. He directed the forces in Kyushu and Okinawa to continue repeated attacks on the same enemy group.\*\*\*\* He also ordered a night radar search from Garan Bi.

At about 2000 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that, acting in accordance with his orders to conduct a search from Kyushu, Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla at 1933 had directed 763rd Air Group at Kanoya to search the sector 137½°-207½°(T) to a distance of 650 miles from that base, the search planes to take off at 0500 the next day.\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 263rd Attack Unit (653rd Air Group) SHO Operations, October 14th-21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.1, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary 653rd Air Group, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160295.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 151855, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 59) WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 151933, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, information to Commander SECCND Striking Force, WDC Document 161644.



At about this same time he learned that no attack had been launched by those units of the "T" Force still in Kyushu.\* The reason for this failure to attack is not known but it may have been due to the lack of operational aircraft. As already noted, by this time most of the "T" Force was on Formosa, and those aircraft which had remained in Kyushu presumably had not been able to join in the attacks launched on previous days because they were not ready. They were apparently still not ready. He most likely learned at this time that two more attack groups launched from the Philippines and totalling about twenty aircraft had been unable to locate the enemy task group northeast of Manila, and had therefore returned to base.\*\*

At about 2100 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch orders for the next day as issued by his Chief of Staff at Hiyoshi. In this dispatch the Chief of Staff, after noting that the enemy task force east of Formosa faced complete destruction as a result of the intense and sustained attacks already made and that the enemy group which had fled toward the Philippines had been attacked and one carrier sunk but without referring to the additional four carriers reported 600 miles northeast of Manila, ordered his forces to carry on without relaxation the general offensive to attain certain victory.\*\*\*

At 2135 he issued orders to the KAGOSHIMA MARU to proceed to Kiirun on the north coast of Formosa as soon as preparations could be made.\*\*\*\* This vessel was a small cargo ship of 162 tons.\*\*\*\*\* At this time it was presumably loading in the Kagoshima Bay area of Kyushu and had been made available to transport ground personnel of the air groups which had deployed to Formosa.

About an hour later, at 2230, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned of Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla's (Kyushu) attack plans for the 16th; these plans provided that the attack would be launched between 0600 and 0630 from Kyushu, staging through Okinawa, and that the attack group would consist of about fifty carrier type bombers and

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 152035, October 1944 to Commander FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, etc., WDC Document 161643.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 152135, October 1944 to KAGOSHIMA MARU, information to Commander 21st Air Flotilla (at Shinchiku) and CofS Sasebo Naval District, FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.

\*\*\*\*\* Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II: Military History Section GHQ, FEC, February 1952.



forty-one fighters under the command of Commander 701st Air Group.\*

At 2255 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force modified his orders issued earlier to the forces on Formosa for operations on the 16th. He now directed that attack forces would not take off as previously directed but instead would be ready on thirty minutes notice after 0600 to take off on special order.\*\* While his reasons for this change of orders are not known, it seems probable that he realized that to commit all of his attack forces to the destruction of the two carriers already damaged and withdrawing at very slow speed when his morning searches might well find other undamaged carriers in the area was not sound employment of his striking power. At least he now believed it better to await the reports of his morning searches and then, on the basis of the situation found to exist at that time, he could better determine the most profitable target for his attack. As discussed earlier this change was sound in that it left open for the time being the selection of targets.

(2) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force,  
October 15th.

As on the previous day, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force presumably launched his morning searches and continued to ready his command for attack operations. Despite the orders issued by Commander Southwest Area Force on the 12th to destroy the enemy task force, he had so far failed to deliver a single attack. His one large effort, a 170 plane attack group composed of forces from his own command and forces from the FOURTH Air Army, had been unable to locate the enemy on the 13th and he had been engaged since then in reassembling his units for further attack.

At about 0830 he received his first contact report of the day. An enemy task group comprising four carriers was reported bearing 066°(T), distant 240 miles from Manila. The sighting was probably made by one of his own search planes. As noted earlier the group sighted was TG 38.4 which comprised four carriers and at the time was actually about forty miles northwest of the reported position. By this time Commander FIFTH Base Air Force had readied some of his aircraft and, at about 0930, he launched his first attack. This attack group consisted of twenty-five carrier type fighters of which six carried bombs.\*\*\* This was not a large attack group, but was apparently all

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\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 152155, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160258.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 152255, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 62) FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947 Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



that were ready at this time. Commander FIFTH Base Air Force hoped that this small group would succeed in at least damaging some of the carriers and thus reduce the air opposition for succeeding attack groups. In the meantime he renewed his efforts to ready a larger group which, together with Army air forces, could inflict greater damage shortly.

About a half hour later, he probably heard of the attack by Formosa planes on a carrier lying dead in the water.

About this same time enemy aircraft attacked the Manila area where his headquarters were located. This enemy group was reportedly composed of eighty fighters and bombers. It was intercepted by about fifty Army and Navy fighters under Army control. Twenty-seven Allied aircraft were reported shot down with five more damaged. Japanese losses in the air were not reported.\* It is of interest that (a) the report of the number of enemy planes in the attack was nearly correct; actually there were seventy-one\*\* and (b) the report of the number of enemy planes shot down was completely erroneous; actually only one plane of the entire group was lost in the attack.\*\*\* The data available does not indicate how Commander FIFTH Base Air Force reacted to this attack, but it seems likely that he decided that it had been launched by the four carriers already sighted. In this he would have been correct, for CTG 38.4 launched this attack at 0848.

At about 1100 he learned, by flash reports, the results of his first attack. The twenty-five plane group reported attacking the enemy task group northeast of Manila at 1045 scoring a direct hit on a battleship or cruiser and a near miss on a large carrier.\* Data available does not indicate how many Japanese planes were lost.

This attack had been made on TG 38.4 and had succeeded in scoring a bomb hit on the deck edge elevator of the FRANKLIN. Damage was superficial. CTG 38.4 believed he had shot down nineteen of the attacking planes.\*\* Although Commander FIFTH Base Air Force did not know it, this attack did succeed in preventing a second attack on the Manila area. Due to this attack CTG 38.4 had been delayed in launching a second Allied attack group of forty-five planes and, after its

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary FRANKLIN, October 15th, 1944.



launching, had held it in the vicinity of the task group to have available its fighters for defense if necessary. By the time the Japanese attack had been dissipated this group had used up too much fuel to proceed to the target and had been recovered.

At about this same time Commander FIFTH Base Air Force probably learned that two carriers had been sighted in the eleven ship group previously reported by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. This indicated that there were two or three carriers east of Formosa which with the four northeast of Manila, totalled six or seven carriers.

At 1400 the second attack group took off from Clark Field on Luzon. This was a combined group of ninety Army and Navy planes\* and was directed to attack the enemy task group to the northeast. While awaiting the results of this attack Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, in cooperation with CG, FOURTH Air Army, expedited plans to launch two more attacks during the afternoon.

Sometime before 1500 he received a report, source unknown, that four additional carriers and several other ships had been sighted on bearing 055°(T) distant 600 miles from Manila.\*\*

He now knew of eight carriers off Luzon and possibly three off Formosa.

Whatever his earlier reactions may have been to the great damage being inflicted by aircraft attacking from Kyushu and Formosa is not known, but it was now clear to him that there still existed many enemy carriers (ten or eleven). It should also have been clear to him that if the enemy was following the plan of operations predicted by CinC, Combined Fleet,\*\*\* well in advance of the Allied strikes and the situation indicated that he was, the Japanese forces in the Philippines would soon be the target for the whole weight of the remaining enemy task force attacks, which might prove the prelude to landing operations.

At about 1630 he learned the results of this second attack. Between 1530 and 1600 the group reported attacking the four carrier enemy task group. One carrier was reported sunk and the flight decks of two

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947 Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Visual Dispatch 0900, October 1944 to SECOND Striking Force; War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\* Situation Estimate at the Start of the Enemy Invasion of Palau and Halmahera, September 17th, 1944, Combined Fleet Headquarters Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-26, Item B.



more set afire. One cruiser was also reported damaged and more than twenty defending fighters were shot down. He was also informed that in this attack, Commander TWENTY-SIXTH Air Flotilla\* had led a unit of torpedo planes and had crash-dived his plane into a carrier. This example of devotion to duty by a high ranking officer formed the basis for the later formation of special attack (Kamikaze) units.\*\* The report of damage inflicted on TG 38.4 in this attack was completely erroneous. The attack group was intercepted by the CAP of TG 38.4 and the attack was turned back. CTG 38.4 believed he had destroyed about twenty Japanese planes of this group.\*\*\* Not a single plane attacked the task group and none were sighted by the ships of the formation.

Whether or not Commander FIFTH Base Air Force accepted the above claims of his pilots is not known but it seems logical that his analysis and that of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force were the same: that is one carrier sunk, one probably sunk and one damaged. This reduced the number of carriers observed off Luzon to "more than six." He must have been gratified by this as it not only indicated that his pilots were good, but it also might act as a deterrent to the enemy should he (the enemy) be planning a landing presently.

At about this same time two more smaller attack groups took off.\*\* These totalled about twenty planes and were presumably all from FIFTH Base Air Force.

At about 1900 Commander FIFTH Base Air Force learned that the third and fourth attack groups which he had launched at about 1630 had failed to locate the enemy task group due to bad weather. The weather had actually deteriorated during the afternoon with the ceiling lowering from about 8,000 feet to less than 1,000 feet by early evening.\*\*\*\*

At about 2100 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's orders to continue the general offensive on the following day.\*\*\*\*\* He probably noted with some satisfaction that in this same dispatch CinC, Combined Fleet credited the Philippines air forces with sinking one enemy carrier during the day, although he personally may have believed that it was likely that he had sunk two carriers. In cooperation with CG, FOURTH Air Army he presumably devoted the remainder of the evening to planning his searches and attacks for the following day.

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\* Rear Admiral Masabumi Arima, IJN.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 15th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Action Against Nansei Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and the Visayas, October 7th-21st, 1944, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 152035, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, WDC Document 160137.



## (d) Operations of CG, FOURTH Air Army, October 15th.

CG, FOURTH Air Army, as on the previous day, presumably launched those short-range morning searches for which he was responsible under his joint agreement with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force. As noted earlier, with both his headquarters and those of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force in the Manila area, these two commanders undoubtedly exchanged information in conjunction with their planning for joint action against the enemy. Accordingly it is probable that CG, FOURTH Air Army was informed of the various contacts which were reported by the searches from the Philippines and also by forces of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force to the north.

When the first contact was received at about 0830 reporting four carriers northeast of Manila, CG, FOURTH Air Army was not ready to join in the attack. Inasmuch as he was responsible for the air defense of the Manila area,\* he was required to maintain defensive fighters to repel any enemy attack and with enemy carriers so close such an attack must have been clearly possible.

Shortly after 1000 CG, FOURTH Air Army launched about fifty fighters to defend the Manila area against enemy attack.\*\* As previously noted these planes engaged the strike of TG 38.4. Whether or not he actually believed the reports of his pilots of shooting down twenty-seven of the enemy planes is not known. The general experience with pilots reports over the past three days of which he must have been informed would indicate that he may have thought them excessive, not only because of previous unverified claims but also because the downed planes could be counted.

By afternoon he had readied additional planes so that he was able to take part in a combined attack with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force. How many of the ninety planes, which took off from Clark Field at 1400, were Army planes is not indicated.\*\*\* The results of this attack have already been noted. It is not clear whether any of the about twenty planes which took off later in the afternoon but were unable to find the enemy were from his command or whether they were Navy planes.

During the remainder of the day, CG, FOURTH Air Army watched the situation closely and exerted every effort to ready as many planes as possible to strengthen his air defense forces and also to provide more aircraft for attacks on the enemy task force on the following day.

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\* Draft Plan of FOURTH Air Army Operations after mid-October, Operations Section, FOURTH Air Army, October 15th, 1944 from file of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, FOURTH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October, 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Since going to press, what may be a more accurate figure of eighty-seven planes rather than ninety, has been received. The eighty-seven planes reportedly consisted of seventy-four Army and thirteen Navy planes. (Daily Record of War Situation maintained by Captain Kinji Takahashi, Operations Department, Imperial General Headquarters, Army Section.)



## (7) Operations on October 16th.

## (a) Operations of CinC, Combined Fleet.

CinC, Combined Fleet probably spent some time during the night in examining the situation and in studying the enemy capabilities with relation thereto. While he knew only two-three carriers had been observed to the eastward of Formosa, he also knew that more than six others were still to the eastward of Luzon. In addition he knew that there had been no attacks on Formosa since October 14th, but there had been attacks on Luzon as late as 1025 the preceding day, October 15th. What did all of this portend? While as stated previously he did not seem to have been concerned about an immediate landing at this time he must have been concerned with the enemy capabilities for future operations, since despite Japanese claims, Allied carrier forces were still strong and his own air forces had suffered heavy losses. He knew that a night search by a radar equipped flying boat was underway from Garan Bi and that orders had been issued for air searches to be made in the morning from Garan Bi, Okinawa and Kyushu and that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had ordered the SIXTH Base Air Forces (a) in Kyushu, to continue the attacks on the enemy carrier force off Formosa which was retiring at slow speed (b) in Formosa, to standby after 0600 to take-off on thirty minutes notice. He was of course, also interested in the SECOND Striking Force, now at sea, for if the two-three Allied carriers remained off Formosa the SECOND Striking Force might be heading into difficulties. He could do little but await later intelligence.

During the early morning he received three contact reports from the flying boat which reported radar contacts on what appeared to be three separate enemy task groups as follows\* (a) at 0045 in Latitude 22°-05'N, Longitude 123°-45'E (b) at 0200 in Latitude 22°-10'N, Longitude 125°-10'E and (c) at 0230 in Latitude 21°-20'N, Longitude 126°-20'E. These reports were very incomplete and gave no indications of the composition or movements of the contacts. He also seems to have received (1) the 0830 October 15th (the preceding day) report of five carriers sighted by the 166th Fighter Unit bearing 210°(T) distant 120

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\* Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551 NA 12402.

miles from Miyako,\* (2) the report of three carriers (one carrier, one medium carrier, one small carrier) and eight cruisers and destroyers sighted by the TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla at 1125 October 15th in Latitude 22°-45'N, Longitude 124°-45'E\*\* and (3) the 2107 October 15th report by Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla which stated, in part, that all but one of his search planes had returned to base without making any contacts other than the 1125 contact previously reported.

These contacts were evidently a complete surprise to him since the intelligence reports and contact reports of the previous day had given no indication of forces other than the ones heretofore discussed. He could now see that if these additional reports of the previous day were true, and the radar contacts by the flying boat although made many hours later tended to confirm them, the situation was very serious. At this time he probably discussed the situation by telephone with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force and decided that contacts (1) and (2) above were on the same task group and that since there was no way at the moment to determine the correct number of carriers he would arbitrarily establish it as four. If these two contacts were to be accepted as having been made on two separate task groups, the probable number of Allied carriers off Formosa based on present estimates would have been increased thereby to an illogical figure. Because of the lack of confirmatory data and the fact that the radar contacts if correct would indicate that these were in fact two separate groups, it seems clear that CinC Combined Fleet accepted the radar contacts primarily as an indication that there were some Allied units there, probably the damaged group which he knew was moving slowly to the southeast. It is significant that these radar contacts are not included in subsequent reports and estimates. Actually TG 30.3 was the only Allied unit in the vicinity and even this group was some sixty miles from the nearest radar contact.

He now had a minimum of six carriers east of Formosa, and about the same number east of Luzon - a total of not less than twelve carriers of which probably nine seemed to be undamaged. He

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 166th Fighter Unit (653rd Air Group) SHO Operations, October 14th-21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004.

\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 151445, October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.



took no action for the present but awaited the results of the morning air searches. These should disclose the gravity of the situation.

He was of course familiar with the contents of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's dispatch issued at 0821 wherein that commander (a) advised his command that there were about six enemy carriers off Formosa and more than six others off Luzon which constituted practically all of the Allied carrier strength and (b) directed the SIXTH Base Air Force (1) to reorganize its strength and launch an all-out attack and (2) to move all forces to Formosa to take station previously ordered for the SHO Operation's decisive battle.\*

CinC, Combined Fleet now decided that the situation was becoming somewhat complicated and felt that he needed advice and more help than was available to him with his very small staff. He evidently found that the telephonic communication with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, which had heretofore sufficed, was now no longer adequate. He wished to be in the heart of the air operations since he might have to issue orders to his various surface forces and he wanted a clearer picture of the developing situation. He decided to transfer his headquarters from Shinchiku to Takao where his Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had his headquarters. Therefore, sometime between 0930 and 1000 he departed for that base where he arrived and hoisted his flag at 1100.\*\* On this trip to Takao he was accompanied by his small staff and by Vice Admiral Takijiro Onishi, IJN who, according to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, had joined him at Shinchiku on October 11th or 12th,\*\*\* although this is not mentioned by CinC, Combined Fleet nor by his Chief of Staff in their interrogations.

This decision to transfer his personal headquarters to Takao seems sound for the reasons above stated but why he did not shift his headquarters to Takao on October 10th rather than some six days later is not clear. Perhaps he did not wish to interfere with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force's operations; perhaps, so long as the battle remained entirely an air battle, he felt that he would be wise to permit that commander to operate more or less independently; perhaps he felt that the communications facilities at Takao Air Base, which were admittedly below standard, might be inadequate to handle both the traffic of the SIXTH Base Air Force and his own traffic, especially that between Shinchiku and Hiyoshi.

From this point on, it is assumed that in view of the closeness of the Headquarters of both CinC, Combined Fleet and Commander SIXTH

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 160821, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 63) WDC Document 160258.

\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 161151, October 1944 to Combined Fleet; War Diary CRUDIV 7, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\* Diary of Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN, August 1st-November 1st, 1944, FIFTH Base Air Force in SHO Operation; GHQ-FEC Special Historical Collection; Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 30, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series Vol. II).



Base Air Force that all information available to one commander was available to the other.

Upon his arrival at Takao he received an intelligence dispatch\* from Imperial General Headquarters which stated:

"Between 0020 and 0330 today, four urgent operational messages were sent by the principal commanders of the U.S. Air Forces at Kuming and other points in China to the commander of the currently operating enemy task force and to the Pacific Fleet Submarine Force command at Honolulu. There is great probability of attacks by the China-based U.S. Air Forces on Formosa and Luzon. Also an intensification of enemy submarine activity should be guarded against."

There is no information as to whether or not he alerted his command to this dispatch but it is assumed that he discussed it with Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.

He also received, at this time, additional contact reports. These were (a) the report that at 0920 two Allied surface ship groups had been contacted. One group consisting of two carriers and four battleships had been sighted in Latitude 21°-05'N, Longitude 124°-25'E on a south-easterly course and a second group of two battleships, four cruisers and five to six destroyers had been sighted about twenty miles to the east of the first group,\*\* (b) the report, source not available to this study, which stated that four carriers had been observed about 600 miles north-east of Manila.\*\*\* This he may have recognized as the task group (TG 38.4) which had struck Manila on the previous day, although if the damage reports of his pilots had been correct there should now be no more than two or three carriers in this group. Actually, as is discussed under "Operations of the SIXTH Base Air Force," this was TG 38.1; and (c) the report that at 1030 in Latitude 21°-50'N, Longitude 127°-50'E an Allied carrier task force consisting of seven carriers, seven battleships, ten cruisers and smaller ships had been sighted on course west.\*\*\*\*

The first two contact reports probably did not unduly arouse him since they were made on task groups which were known to be in the area,

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\* Chief Special Affairs Bureau Imperial General Headquarters Dispatch 161005, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, Commander SECOND Striking Force; War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* Merit Report 14th Combined Air Group Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\*\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 161226, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, WDC Document 161638.



but the third contact report was something quite new and so powerful as to be seriously menacing. When considered with relation to the first two contacts he could readily see that he was confronted by thirteen carriers. This supported his early morning estimate of more than twelve carriers on the previous day. He probably decided that this new contact was a concentration of the four-carrier task group reported as bearing 055°(T) distant 600 miles from Manila the previous day with the group which had first been reported at 0830 the previous morning as having five carriers and then, later in the same morning at 1125, as having three carriers. He must now have arrived at the unhappy conclusion that the reported Japanese air successes of the past few days were almost entirely untrue since TF 38 in virtually its greatest reported strength lay before him. He also knew at this time that the attack group of ninety-nine planes ordered from Kyushu and which had actually taken off had been recalled, but it is doubtful if he knew why.\*

He had now to reestimate the situation. What he thought and why is not known, but the fact that at 1209 from Takao he issued a special dispatch to his command on the situation is known.\*\* In this dispatch he stated (a) the retreating enemy was concentrating his strength to cover his damaged ships and it was not impossible that a part of his forces would counterattack, (b) the base air forces would endeavor to ascertain the enemy situation; would concentrate as much strength as possible and would pursue and destroy the enemy, (c) the SECOND Striking Force would keep close watch on the enemy situation and cooperate with air force operations, (d) the submarine units would vigorously advance and attack the enemy.

From this dispatch does it not seem clear that he was endeavoring more to calm his command than to admit to them that the air battle had been lost? Perhaps he truly believed that the Allied carrier task group of seven carriers which was heading to the westward, was actually closing the other two contacts reported in order to concentrate with them since these latter bore 255°(T) distant 180 miles from the seven carrier group, and were reportedly retiring at slow speed. Certainly from the situation as it appeared on the chart it was possible to make that deduction. But, on the other hand, this powerful task force, when concentrated with the two-carrier task force, would present nine and, should the additional four-carrier task force reported nearby be included, would present thirteen carriers off Formosa which were quite capable of continuing the attacks on that island not only for the purpose of protecting the retiring task group without carriers, but also for the purpose of completing the

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\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 161857, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160258.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161209, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces etc., (Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd 11), WDC Document 160264.



destruction of Japanese planes and facilities on Formosa and thereby facilitating later operations. What did he have in the area with which to oppose such an attack? Merely a disorganized and seriously reduced base air force as discussed later under "Operations of SIXTH Base Air Force." Did he not give thought again to his prediction of long ago that air operations of this nature would be employed by the Allies to reduce Japanese air power prior to an amphibious landing?

Actually the Allied carriers were not proceeding to cover TG 30.3 but were instead preparing, based on Allied intelligence, for a fleet action. Their search planes were out - they were eager for battle - they were in almost full strength in ships and planes.

At about 1256 he received a dispatch from his Chief of Staff at Hiyoshi to the Commander SECOND Striking Force\* wherein the Chief of Staff advised that command that sightings had been made as follows: (a) at 0945 two carriers and several other ships, course southeast. Large enemy force about twenty miles east of the above, and (b) at 1030 seven carriers, seven battleships, ten plus cruisers and below on course west, and advised him that in view of this enemy strength he take a course to the north of the Nansei Shoto.

From this dispatch he could see that at last the high command in Tokyo was alerted to the character and power of TF 38 and to the fact that most of its carrier strength was obviously intact.

At about this same time he knew that a large number of B-29's were attacking the Tainan area and had appeared over Takao. This was also in consonance with the predictions and the intelligence concerning prospective Allied operations which had preceded the TF 38 attacks on Okinawa. Does it not seem surprising that he still seems to have refrained from giving proper consideration to the possibility of continuing strong Allied action against Formosa and the Philippines with a possibility of an ultimate landing?

At about 1435 he received a CinC, Combined Fleet directive to Commander FIRST Striking Force issued by dispatch at 1405 by his Chief of Staff from the Hiyoshi headquarters wherein the Chief of Staff directed that command to prepare immediately to sortie.\*\* He could do this because he had been informed by Commander FIRST Striking Force on the evening of October 14th that he would be ready for battle by evening, October 15th.

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\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 161226, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161405, October 1944 to Commanders Mobile Force and FIRST Striking Force; War Diary SUZUYA, October 1944, WDC Document 161636



Then about this same time he received the usual explanatory dispatch from his Chief of Staff, to Commander FIRST Striking Force explaining the above order. The dispatch follows:

"Search missions today, October 16th, show that the remaining enemy strength is relatively large. It is therefore not impossible that the enemy will continue to operate within the range of our base air forces in order to assist his damaged ships, or that he may actively resume the offensive. It is anticipated that our base air forces will continue attack operations for several days more and that the number of damaged enemy ships will increase. Accordingly, we are considering the advisability of speedily dispatching the FIRST Striking Force for a decisive battle in order to augment the enemy losses. The order to prepare for sortie was issued on this basis. However, since it is recognized that such a sortie would vitally affect the fuel situation as well as future operations, the final sortie order will be issued (only) if the sortie appears necessary upon consideration of the over-all situation."\*

This dispatch is confusing. What does "relatively large" mean and what did it mean to the interested commanders? Presumably it meant relative to the number of carriers which the Chief of Staff infers he expected to discover. But what did he expect to discover? On the preceding day he knew of a minimum of eight - nine carriers off Formosa - Luzon. Today he knew of thirteen. Was the "relatively large" based on the ratio of thirteen versus eight or nine or was it based on thirteen versus "the complete destruction which the Chief of Staff had reported the remaining strength of TF 38 off Formosa had faced on the evening of the previous day?"

That the Chief of Staff was more realistic than was CinC, Combined Fleet concerning the capabilities of TF 38 seems clear for, whereas CinC, Combined Fleet referred to the possibility of counter-bombing by TF 38 to protect the damaged retiring forces the Chief of Staff pointed out that TF 38 was in such strength as to make it quite possible for that task force to resume actively the offensive.

On the other hand the Chief of Staff was not realistic when he stated that the "number of damaged ships will increase" since from the contacts now made (thirteen carriers) he knew that only limited damage had been inflicted on the enemy despite many attacks by his best pilots, and therefore the probability of increased damage was slight. Also he was not realistic when he ordered Commander FIRST Striking Force to prepare immediately to sortie for decisive action since the Allied carrier

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



task force was evidently in great strength - much stronger even than the Combined Fleet - his own base air forces were relatively weak, and the distance from Lingga-Singapore to the objective area off Formosa-Luzon was so great (about 1700 miles) as to necessitate, with refueling, the passage of about six days before the FIRST Striking Force could appear in that area. In addition, it was evident that should TF 38 actually be retiring, that force could, in a matter of a day or so, be beyond the effective range of Japanese land-based aircraft so that own surface forces would be forced to operate without fighter cover since the Main Force also lacked aircraft in consequential numbers on its carriers. All of this was known to the Chief of Staff.

Students of naval warfare may wonder, if the above analysis is accepted, why it was that the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet sent such a message to Commander FIRST Striking Force. There appear to have been two possible answers neither of which can be documented. These answers are:

(1) That the message meant what it said.

(a) That the Chief of Staff, and possibly the Naval General Staff, was thoroughly confused because of his sudden realization that the great gamble, the activation of the SHO plan for the base air forces only, had failed, and might become a complete disaster.

(b) That he now, in a desperate state of mind, and most anxious to snatch victory out of almost certain defeat, commenced thinking illogically, as is evidenced by (1) his concept that his base air forces, which he well knew were thoroughly worn out and seriously depleted, would have any success against the almost undamaged TF 38; (2) his concept that such depleted air forces augmented by the FIRST and SECOND Striking Forces, would be able, even if TF 38 remained in the area, to defeat that task force, which, as had been pointed out earlier, was at this time much stronger than the Combined Fleet augmented by the base air forces. He had lost three-quarters of his "T" Force and one-third of other base air force aircraft\* in six days and had succeeded, if the present contact reports were correct, in destroying but three or four enemy carriers. How then could he expect, with his vastly reduced air forces, to defeat thirteen carriers with possibly normal air complements?

(2) That the message did not mean what it said.

(a) That the Chief of Staff wished to have the FIRST Striking Force ready for any eventuality, and did not, at this time,

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



desire to reveal the real reason - the fear of an invasion - since should TF 38 actually retire and no invasion occur he could still claim victory despite the Japanese air losses.

(b) That he felt that Commander FIRST Striking Force, as an experienced naval officer, would, as actually happened, recognize the improbable features of the dispatch and therefore would understand what it was intended to convey - that the air battle had been lost - and that he was to prepare not so much for decisive battle against TF 38 as for decisive battle against future enemy action, i.e., invasion.

In respect to paragraph (a) above, the Chief of Staff did have some reason for the thought that TF 38 might retire to Saipan since Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla in Kyushu stated in his report\* that Allied prisoners of war shot down on Formosa had divulged, among other items--notably the composition of that portion of TF 38 operating off Formosa--that after the three-day Formosa air strikes, TF 38 would return to Saipan. It is not known what credence the Chief of Staff placed in this information. However since it was received by COMBATDIV ONE at Lingga,\*\* it was undoubtedly available to him and may have influenced his thinking.

Actually, the information given by the prisoners relative to retirement was incorrect since TF 38 was not scheduled to retire immediately after the Formosa strikes and was not in any event to retire to Saipan but rather to Ulithi. The prisoners stated that (a) there were four task groups operating off Formosa under Admiral Halsey as Commander THIRD Fleet and Admiral Mitscher as CTF 38; (b) the first task group was composed of four carriers, three cruisers, ten-twelve destroyers; (c) the second task group of four carriers, two battleships, five cruisers, fifteen destroyers; (d) the third task group of four carriers, five battleships, two cruisers, thirteen destroyers and (e) the fourth task group of three-four battleships, two-three cruisers, twelve-fifteen destroyers. The information given concerning the names of the commanders of the THIRD Fleet and of TF 38 was correct; the composition of the three carrier task groups operating off Formosa (TG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.3) was quite accurate as regards the larger ships, and was reasonably accurate as regards the destroyers; the

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\* Detailed Action Report No. 4, 51st Air Flotilla, October 10th - November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645 NA 12262.

\*\* Vice Admiral Mataome Ugaki, IJN (COMBATDIV 1), Personal Diary of, "SENSOROKU" Vol. II, March 15th, 1953, by Nippon Shuppan Kyodo Kabushiki Kaisha.



composition of the fourth group was very much in error. It is presumed that this referred to either TF 34 which at this time existed only in the plan, or to TG 30.3 which was retiring.

CinC, Combined Fleet now learned that (a) the attack group of 107 planes which had departed Formosa to attack the two carrier task group had reported damaging and setting afire one carrier and damaging one battleship, losing in the action twenty-seven planes,\* and (b) a twenty-two plane attack which had been launched from the Philippines had failed to find a target and had returned to base.\*\*

Outside of general information concerning the operations of the various base air forces CinC, Combined Fleet received no unusual information until about 1730 when he received two public announcements from Imperial General Headquarters timed at 1500 and 1630, October 16th which stated:\*\*\* (a) 1500 announcement--Our forces are continuing to pursue the fleeing enemy task forces. Combined battle results inclusive of those already made public are (1) Sunk: Ten carriers, two battleships, three cruisers, one destroyer; damaged: Three carriers, one battleship, four cruisers, eleven ships of undetermined type. (b) 1630 announcement included additional claims for an attack on the Philippines the preceding day. Sunk: One carrier; damaged - three carriers, one battleship or cruiser.

The total Japanese claims then were: (1) Sunk: Eleven carriers, two battleships, three cruisers, one destroyer. (2) Damaged: Six carriers, two battleships, four cruisers, eleven undetermined type.

These announcements, in the light of the thirteen carriers already sighted that day were such an obvious exaggeration that it is highly probable that CinC, Combined Fleet recognized them immediately for what they were - pure propaganda - and gave them no consideration in his estimate.

At about 2037 he received his Chief of Staff's dispatch to Commander SECOND Striking Force wherein the Chief of Staff directed that commander that should the air searches scheduled for the following day

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer SECOND Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Diary of Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN, August 1st-November 1st, 1944, FIFTH Base Air Force in SHO Operation; GHQ-FEC Special Historical Collection; Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 30, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series Vol. II); also New York Times, October 17th, 1944.



(October 17th) reveal the enemy carrier groups to be still intact and a night attack impossible, he was to proceed to Mako in the Pescadores Islands.\*

This message must have been of some concern to CinC, Combined Fleet since it was highly indefinite, and placed Commander SECOND Striking Force in the unenviable position of having to make a decision on what might be very limited information. What, for example, would Commander SECOND Striking Force do should weather conditions make search operations of doubtful value? The weather diagrams show that weather conditions were not expected to be favorable. Again he may have wondered why the SECOND Striking Force was to proceed to Mako rather than to return to the Inland Sea, since Mako being in the Pescadores was a likely target for B-29's from China bases, as well as a target for the planes of TF 38 should that task force resume the offensive against Formosa. The answer seems to have been that he accepted this risk (a) because of the oil shortage in the Empire it was considered wise to send this force to Mako where an oiler - the RYOEI MARU was due to arrive on October 20th - and (b) because Mako was about 900 miles nearer the southern Philippines than was the Inland Sea, and therefore the SECOND Striking Force would be better positioned in the event (1) surface operations became practicable against units of TF 38 or (2) an invasion took place as anticipated in the southern Philippines. He probably made a note that air cover should be provided.

If CinC, Combined Fleet had had any doubts as to Imperial General Headquarters reasons for sending out the public announcement previously referred to, these doubts must now have been dispelled for it was clear that the High Command fully realized that their air battle had been unsuccessful.

There is no information available as to the further actions of CinC, Combined Fleet. However, it seems logical to assume that both he and his Commander SIXTH Base Air Force discussed the developing situation most carefully and arrived at the conclusion that since the Allies, in view of their evident strength, were capable of resuming the offensive against Okinawa, Formosa and the Philippines as well as to attempt other operations, it would be well to continue the searches to ensure that the Allied plans were discernible as early as possible.

(b) Operations of Commander Mobile Force.

Commander Mobile Force during October 16th took no important action except to follow the activities of Commander SECOND Striking Force, and to ensure that the remaining planes under his command were

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\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 162007, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.



prepared for immediate dispatch to south Kyushu as replacements for those planes of his force now operating in the Formosa operation.\*

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force,  
October 16th.

Commander FIRST Striking Force at Lingga, with most of his ships now ready for battle, continued expediting the work being done on CRUDIV SIXTEEN and NOSHIRO which were at Singapore. It will be remembered that the idea of preparing his command for battle was not the result of a directive from Commander Mobile Force or from CinC, Combined Fleet, but instead was the result of his own estimate of the developing situation. He had received no instructions from the high command since 1635 October 10th when the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet had advised him that it was his intention to keep the Mobile Force (less carrier air groups) on standby in its present dispositions.\*\* At about 1130 he received the report that CinC, Combined Fleet had shifted his headquarters from Shinchiku to Takao.\*\*\* He also likely received the various morning contact reports\*\*\*\* so that he knew about noon that thirteen carriers had been observed that morning to the eastward of Formosa. This should not have surprised him since, as has been pointed out earlier, he had not believed many of the claims made by the Japanese pilots and had decided as early as October 14th, that an invasion was inevitable. This sighting merely reinforced that view.

At about 1435 he received a directive from CinC, Combined Fleet directing the FIRST Striking Force to prepare immediately to sortie.\*\*\*\*\* This was followed by an explanatory dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet, which is quoted in full under CinC, Combined Fleet, and which, after explaining the present situation, advised Commander FIRST Striking Force as follows: "Accordingly we are considering the

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\* War Diary FIRST Mobile Fleet, October 1944, WDC Document 160341.

\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 101035, October 1944 to Commander Mobile Force, Commander FIRST Striking Force, etc.; War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161005.

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161151, October 1944 to Combined Fleet; War Diary CRUDIV 7, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\*\* Merit Report 14th Combined Air Group Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012; also Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104, also CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161226, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161405, October 1944 to Commanders Mobile Force and FIRST Striking Force; War Diary SUZUYA, October 1944, WDC Document 161636.



advisability of immediately sending the FIRST Striking Force for a decisive battle in order to augment the enemy losses." Also, "That since it is recognized that such a sortie would vitally affect the fuel situation as well as future operations the final sortie order will be issued (only) if sortie appears necessary upon consideration of the over-all situation."\*

It seems clear that Commander FIRST Striking Force immediately realized that either the Chief of Staff was thoroughly confused or else this dispatch was designed to convey a meaning not clear to the uninformed recipient. He analyzed the situation and arrived at the conclusion that there was little possibility of accomplishing the objective of the sortie. He based this conclusion primarily on the estimate that even if the FIRST Striking Force should sortie for Formosa, it could not reach the scene of battle before the 22nd or the 23rd because of the necessity of refueling en route. He also based his estimate on the obvious fact that if the enemy were planning to withdraw, his forces would probably be beyond the attack range of the base air forces by the evening of the 18th.\*

Commander FIRST Striking Force now intensified his preparations to ensure that he was ready for any eventuality, and issued instructions as follows:

(a) At 1600 he placed his command in condition of Battle Readiness No. 1.\*\*

(b) At 1615 he cancelled the AOBA docking and directed both the AOBA and NOSHIRO which were still at Singapore, to complete sortie preparations immediately and to be ready for twenty knots on two hours notice.\*\*\*

(c) At about the same time he appears to have directed the KINU and URANAMI of CRUDIV SIXTEEN to depart Singapore for they arrived at Lingga during the day.\*\*\*\*

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government October 1947, Department of Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Commander FIRST Striking Force visual Dispatch 161600, October 1944 to FIRST Striking Force (FIRST Striking Force SigOrd 170) War Diary SHIGURE, WDC Document 161717 (Part 4).

\*\*\* Commander FIRST Striking Force Dispatch 161615, October 1944 to NOSHIRO, AOBA Action Report FIRST Striking Force SHO Operations WDC Document 161641.

\*\*\*\* War Diary CRUDIV SIXTEEN, October 1st-15th, 1944, WDC Document 160986 NA 11730.



(d) At 1656 he ordered all of the observation planes installing radar gear at Singapore to return to their parent ships by the following morning.\*

(e) At 1715 he directed all units that, with the exception of the air units dispatched to Singapore, the FIRST Striking Force would complete sortie preparations during the day.\*\*

(f) At 1800 he informed CinC, Combined Fleet that the FIRST Striking Force was ready for sortie with the exceptions of (1) the NOSHIRO at Singapore, which would be ready at noon on the following day (2) the AOBA at Singapore which would be ready by evening on the following day and (3) the about ten seaplanes, also at Singapore which would be returned to their parent ships by noon on the following day.\*\*\*

Thus, with the exception of the two destroyers HAYASHIMO and AKISHIMO, which were en route to Manila to report to Commander Southwest Area Force for temporary duty, all of his command, by evening on October 17th would be ready in all respects (a) to sortie and (b) to battle.

In view of the above activities of Commander FIRST Striking Force and the fact that he considered that an invasion was inevitable it may perhaps seem somewhat discordant that he did not take some action to ensure that sufficient oilers were ordered to proceed immediately to Brunei Bay and to there await his arrival. However, this is not believed to have been the case since (a) except for the NIPPO MARU (a 13,000-ton, fourteen-knot oiler) which was under Commander FIRST Striking Force and was presently at Singapore, all other oilers were under the direct command of CinC, Combined Fleet (b) CinC, Combined Fleet was therefore responsible for either (1) dispatching the oilers himself, or (2) assigning sufficient oilers to Commander FIRST Striking Force for this purpose. The fact that he did not do so was a possible indication to Commander FIRST Striking Force that CinC, Combined Fleet was not anticipating an immediate invasion. Whether or not Commander FIRST Striking Force concurred with this view is not known.

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\* Commander FIRST Striking Force Dispatch 161656, October 1944 to FIRST Striking Force No. 2 Air Base, NOSHIRO, etc., October 1944 Action Report FIRST Striking Force SHO Operations, WDC Document 161641.

\*\* Commander FIRST Striking Force visual Dispatch 161715, October 1944 to FIRST Striking Force (FIRST Striking Force SigOpOrd 1) War Diary SHIGURE, WDC Document 161717, (part 4).

\*\*\* Commander FIRST Striking Force Dispatch 161800, October 1944 to CinC, Combined Fleet, Action Report FIRST Striking Force SHO Operations, WDC Document 161641.



## (2) Operations of Commander Main Force, October 16th.

Commander Main Force remained ashore at his headquarters at Oita Air Base. He continued the preparations of his surface forces for sea, and continued the training of those air units which had not as yet been transferred to the SIXTH Base Air Force.

His light forces continued to assist in shore basing the air groups. The SHIMOTSUKI remained at Kagoshima.\* At 0856 he received Commander Mobile Force directive 160856 to the commanding officers of the WAKATSUKI and SUZUTSUKI to transport the personnel and materiel of the 653rd Air Group to Takao and then to return to the Inland Sea.\*\* The two destroyers departed Oita during the day and proceeded to Takao via Bungo Suido and Kagoshima.\*\*\*

Commander Main Force had his surface units disposed as follows:

- (1) OYODO at Oita.
- (2) CARDIV ONE - UNRYU at Kure.
- (3) CARDIV THREE - ZUIKAKU at Oita, ZUIHO and CHITOSE at Yashima, CHIYODA in Western Inland Sea, probably at Yashima.
- (4) CARDIV FOUR - ISE and HYUGA at Iwakuni.
- (5) DESRON THIRTY-ONE - IZUSU at Kure, destroyers (DESDIV FORTY-THREE) MAKI, KIRI, KUWA, in Western Inland Sea.
- (6) DESDIV's FORTY-ONE and SIXTY-ONE in Western Inland Sea except WAKATSUKI and SUZUTSUKI en route Kagoshima, SHIMOTSUKI at Kagoshima and FUYUTSUKI at Kure (in dry dock).
- (7) DESRON ELEVEN at Iwakuni, except SUGI which was at sea en route Kagoshima.

At 2212 the SUZUTSUKI was torpedoed in the bow off Bungo Suido by the submarine BESUGO,\*\*\*\* as a result of which both destroyers returned to the Inland Sea.

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\* War Diary DESRON 10, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* Commander Mobile Force Dispatch 160856, October 1944 to WAKATSUKI and SUZUTSUKI (Mobile Force SigOrd 8), War Diary DESRON 10, WDC Document 161658.

\*\*\* War Diary 653rd Air Group Units, October 1944, WDC Document 160295 NA 12530.

\*\*\*\* War Patrol Report BESUGO, Report of FIRST War Patrol, Serial 027, November 4th, 1944; also BESUGO Dispatch 161634 to CTF 17, Information COMINCH, COMTHIRDFLT.

(3) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force,  
October 16th.

Commander SECOND Striking Force with CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE and DESRON ONE continued at moderate speeds - sixteen to eighteen knots - on southerly courses, zigzagging against submarines. DESDIV TWENTY-ONE also continued on in similar manner, but well astern and well beyond radar contact.

He knew that at 0400 he would be within range of the Allied B-24's on Saipan. Therefore, it is assumed that at 0600 his ships assumed Anti-Aircraft Alert No. 2 and Radar Alert No. 2 as previously ordered.\*

At about 0800 he advised his command that six (actually there were seven), enemy patrol planes had departed Saipan between 0500 and 0630. This information was received from Japanese Communications Intelligence.\*\*

At 0900 he advised his command by visual signal that he had made an estimate of the enemy situation as of 1500 the preceding day and indicated the location of the contacts which he knew. This dispatch was:\*\*\*

(a) Composite intelligence estimate of enemy situation 1500 October 15th is as follows:

(1) One carrier, two battleships lying to and leaking oil on bearing 083°(T) distance 220 miles from Garan Bi, eleven destroyers guarding, and direct air cover present (1500 October 15th).

(2) Strong probability of damaged enemy carrier(s) on bearing 068°(T) distance 155 miles from Garan Bi (0930 October 15th).

(3) Large enemy force including four carriers on bearing 060°(T) distance 220 miles from Manila (1100 October 15th).

(b) In addition to the above, four carriers and several other ships (reported) on bearing 055°(T) distance 600 miles from Manila. From noon on search contact or attack by enemy carrier or aircraft possible. Tighten anti-aircraft alert dispositions and prepare for sudden anti-aircraft gun action.

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\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 151725, October 1944 (SECOND Striking Force SigOrd 128) to SECOND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1st-31st, 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* Ibid, Dispatch 160800, October 1944.

\*\*\* Commander SECOND Striking Force Dispatch 160900, October 1944 to SECOND Striking Force (SECOND Striking Force SigOpOrd 129) War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.



From his plot it was clear to Commander SECOND Striking Force that should he continue on southerly courses at present speed he would be heading into danger since the nearest Allied carrier was, at 1500 October 15th, about 680 miles away, and now since eighteen hours had elapsed, he was, from Diagram H, about 475 miles away, assuming, of course, that the carrier was still lying to, or at the most, slowly retiring. He decided to continue on and await instructions from CinC, Combined Fleet. His action in doing so was sound for he knew that own air forces were attacking the one or more carriers off Formosa that day and should provide him the needed protection. Should they fail he could expect to receive orders from his commander.

During the forenoon he found it necessary to refuel his destroyers. Therefore, at 1045 he commenced refueling them from the two cruisers of CRUDIV TWENTY-ONE.\* The sky was clear and evidently the sea conditions were satisfactory.

At 1203 the ABUKUMA detected a large plane bearing 080°(T).\*\*

At 1325 Commander SECOND Striking Force received a dispatch\*\*\* from Imperial General Headquarters, with a time group of 1005, wherein that headquarters advised him in part that there was a probability of attacks by the China-based U.S. Air Forces on Formosa and Luzon, and that an intensification of enemy submarine activity should be guarded against.

He continued his fueling until 1429 when two enemy carrier fighters were sighted closing the formation. These planes which were from the BUNKER HILL in TG 38.2\*\*\*\* were driven off by anti-aircraft fire. Commander SECOND Striking Force now at 1440 directed that the fueling be discontinued, presumably because he was sure that he had been reported, which was correct, and realized that it was tactically unsound to have the freedom of action of his ships restricted by fueling operations. At 1450 he reversed course to north to retire, if possible, beyond the range of the carrier aircraft.\* At 1452 he received a dispatch from Commander SIXTH Base Air Force advising that "the enemy appears to be pouring

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\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* War Diary ABUKUMA, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 161636.

\*\*\* Chief Special Affairs Bureau Imperial General Headquarters Dispatch 161005, October 1944, to CinC, Combined Fleet, Commander SECOND Striking Force; War Diary DESRON 1, October, 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* Aircraft Action Report Air Group 8, forwarded by BUNKER HILL, Serial 0304, October 30th, 1944.



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in virtually his entire carrier strength. More than six carriers are still operating to the east of Formosa.\*\*

This dispatch appears to have convinced him that his decision to retire was sound. COMDESRON ONE, who was in the ABUKUMA, states that Commander SECOND Striking Force retired because of intelligence reports which indicated that an undamaged enemy task group (three carriers, seven battleships and ten cruisers) blocked the course to the south, but it seems probable that his analysis is incorrect, since the message referring to battleships and cruisers was not received by the ABUKUMA until 1640\*\* and, instead of referring to three battleships referred to nine battleships.

At about 1505 DESDIV TWENTY-ONE which was about twenty miles to the westward of the SECOND Striking Force and in a position about 130 miles to the eastward of Okinawa, sighted enemy carrier planes.\*\* The destroyers opened fire without inflicting any damage on the planes. COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE now, having been observed, correctly broke radio silence and informed Commander SECOND Striking Force as follows: This unit is in action against enemy Grummans (referring to fighters built by the Grumman Aircraft Corporation). Position Latitude 26°-30'N, Longitude 129°-50'E.\*\*\*

This message was received by Commander SECOND Striking Force at 1524 and was probably the first definite information that he had received concerning the location of his missing DESDIV TWENTY-ONE.

At 1640 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet at Hiyoshi wherein that commander advised him (a) that sightings had been made as follows: (1) At 0945 in Latitude 21°-70'N, Longitude 124°-30'E, two carriers and several other ships on course southeast. Large enemy force about twenty miles east of the above; (2) at 1030 in Latitude 21°-50'N, Longitude 127°-50'E, seven carriers, seven battleships, ten plus cruisers and below course west, and (b) to take a course to the north of the Nansei Shoto.\*\*\*\*

From his later action it is correct to say that Commander SECOND Striking Force accepted this advice and decided to carry out the recommendations.

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 161452, October 1944  
War Diary DESRON 1, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\* COMDESDIV 21 Dispatch 161505, October 1944 to COMDESRON 1, Commander SECOND Striking Force; War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161226, October 1944, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

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Sometime before 1715, in view of the fact that his presence had been known to the enemy at 1430 and possibly later, and since sunset would be at 1747 and the end of evening twilight at 1811, Commander SECOND Striking Force appears to have decided it might be well to practice radio deception in order to reduce the probability of his command being trailed by Allied night search planes. He, therefore, at 1715 directed the USHIO that "upon receipt of radio signal from the (flagship) NACHI, USHIO will separate. Signal(s) will be sent between Amami O Shima and Tokuno Shima. USHIO will rejoin during 17th. Position of force at 0900, Latitude 29°-00'N, Longitude 128°-00'E, course 220°(T), speed eighteen knots.\*\*

Since this 0900 rendezvous was but eighty miles northwest of Amami O Shima, it seems clear that Commander SECOND Striking Force wished to remain within easy distance of that island, where fueling facilities, and a harbor, were available, rather than to continue on a northerly course to pass clear of the entire Nansei group.

At 1720 Commander SECOND Striking Force received a dispatch from COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE, time group 1600, wherein that commander reported "enemy aircraft repulsed. No damage. Position (at 1600) Latitude 26°-50'N, Longitude 130°-10'E, course north, speed twenty-six knots.\*\*\*

At 1800 Commander SECOND Striking Force ordered the USHIO to depart on duty assigned and she left the formation.\*\*

At 1845 he received CinC, Combined Fleet's dispatch 161209\*\*\* wherein that Commander stated: (a) The retreating enemy is concentrating his strength to cover his damaged ships, and it is not impossible that a part of his forces will counterattack. (b) The Base Air Forces will endeavor to ascertain the enemy situation, will concentrate as much strength as possible and will pursue and destroy the enemy. (c) The SECOND Striking Force will keep close watch on the enemy situation and cooperate with air force operations. (d) Submarine units will vigorously advance and attack the enemy.

This dispatch could not have been alarming. It showed Commander SECOND Striking Force that CinC, Combined Fleet was alert to his situation and would clearly keep him advised. Besides, retiring to the north as he was, he was rapidly drawing away from the area of Allied carrier operations.

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\* Commander SECOND Striking Force visual Dispatch 161715, October 1944, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\* CinC Combined Fleet Dispatch 161209, October 1944; War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638, NA 11739.



At 2021 the SECOND Striking Force was fired at by the SKATE with three torpedoes. All torpedoes missed and were not observed by SECOND Striking Force.\*

At 2030 DESDIV TWENTY-ONE rejoined the SECOND Striking Force which now, for the first time since leaving the Inland Sea, had all of its units in company with the single exception of the USHIO. The SECOND Striking Force at 2034 detected the SKATE and made an ineffective attack on her, dropping ten depth charges.\*

During the confusion resulting from the submarine contact and from a passing rain squall which obscured the ships, the destroyer HATSUHARU which was with DESDIV TWENTY-ONE became separated from the SECOND Striking Force. Her position was unknown until 2315 when her Commanding Officer advised Commander Striking Force that he had become lost in a shower, that his 2300 location had been Latitude 28°-46'N, Longitude 131°-16'E, course 020°(T) speed eighteen, and requested instructions.\*\*

Commander SECOND Striking Force took no action at this time presumably because he was still maintaining radio silence.

At about 2250 he received a dispatch from the Chief of Staff Combined Fleet which directed, in part, that "If air search on October 17th reveals the enemy carrier groups to be still intact and a night attack is impossible you will proceed to Make (Pescadores) and await further orders."\*\*\*

What Commander SECOND Striking Force thought when he received this dispatch is nowhere discussed. However, since (a) Make was to the westward of Formosa and therefore much nearer Luzon than any of the Nansei Shoto, (b) he was aware of the orders to the FIRST Striking Force to be prepared to sortie immediately and (c) he was also aware of the many carriers off Formosa, it seems logical to assume that he visualized that (1) the Chief of Staff feared an invasion attempt presently and was quietly disposing his forces for that eventuality, or (2) actually planned to employ both the FIRST and SECOND Striking Force in an all-out attempt against the enemy carrier forces.

Commander SECOND Striking Force with the SECOND Striking Force, less the HATSUHARU, and the USHIO which latter destroyer was on detached duty to the south of Amami O Shima, continued steaming north until 2400, at which time he rounded Amami O Shima and debouched to the northwest of the Nansei Shoto.\*\*\*

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\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739, War Patrol Report SKATE, Report of SIXTH War Patrol Serial C52, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\* HATSUHARU Dispatch 162315, October 1944 to COMDESDIV TWENTY-ONE, COMDESDRON 1, War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.



## (c) Operations of the Base Air Forces on October 16th.

## (1) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.

During the early morning of October 16th, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, having directed\* his forces (a) to continue the general offensive against the enemy task force, (b) to make searches from Kyushu, Okinawa and Garan Bi and (c) to launch an early morning attack from Kyushu against enemy carriers and battleships dead in the water near Latitude 22°-05'N, Longitude 124°-55'E, issued no further orders. He held his attack forces on Formosa in readiness pending the results of his searches.

During the early morning he received three contact reports from the flying boat which reported radar contacts on what appeared to be three separate enemy task groups as follows:\*\* (a) At 0045 in Latitude 22°-05'N, Longitude 123°-45'E, (b) at 0200 in Latitude 22°-10'N, Longitude 125°-10'E and (c) at 0230 in Latitude 21°-20'N, Longitude 126°-20'E. These reports were very incomplete and gave no indications of the composition or movements of the contacts. He also seems to have received (1) the 0830 October 15th (the preceding day) report of five carriers sighted by the 166th Fighter Unit bearing 210°(T) distant 120 miles from Miyako,\*\*\* (2) the report of three carriers (one carrier, one medium carrier, one small carrier) and eight cruisers and destroyers sighted by the TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla at 1125 October 15th in Latitude 22°-45'N, Longitude 124°-45'E\*\*\*\* and (3) the 2107 October 15th report by Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla that (1) all but one of his search planes had returned to base without making any contacts other than the 1125 contact previously reported, and (2) one plane assigned sector 178°-188°(T) from Okinawa had failed to return. The weather in the search area was reported cloudy with scattered squalls and ten miles visibility.

These reports were an evident surprise since no reports on the previous day which he had received from his own forces nor any reports of contacts received by other forces, nor any evaluations received from other sources indicated that more than two or three carriers had been observed off Formosa. He could now see that if these additional reports of the previous day were true, and the radar contacts by the flying boat, although made many hours later, tended to confirm them, the situation

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 151855, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, War Diary 25th Air Flotilla, WDC Document 160137.

\*\* Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group, Night Searches, October 10th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551 NA 12402.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 166th Fighter Unit (653rd Air Group) SHO Operations, October 14th-21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004.

\*\*\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch 151445, October 1944 to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.



was very serious. He evaluated the "five carrier" report and the "three carrier" report as being the same group consisting of "four carriers" since the contacts were relatively near one another (forty miles) and three hours had elapsed between the sightings. He now knew of about six carriers off Formosa--the two observed on the previous day and the above four which had also been observed on the previous day--and he knew of not less than six off Luzon.

In the above evaluation he does not appear to have given serious consideration to the flying boat contacts because there was a lack of confirmatory data and because the pilot himself was not firm in his evaluation. Also, he realized that if he accepted the reported radar contacts as true, this would lead to an illogical increase in the number of Allied carriers estimated to be off Formosa. He, like CinC Combined Fleet, therefore appears to have accepted the radar contacts primarily as an indication that some enemy forces were still in the vicinity, probably the damaged group which he knew was moving slowly to the southwest.

It is not clear what the flying boat contacted since TG's 38.1, 38.2, and 38.3 were over 430 miles to the eastward of Garan Bi and therefore were some eighty miles to the eastward of the easternmost contact. It is probable that the pilot contacted only TG 30.3 which was within the radius searched by the flying boat (300 miles) since units of that task group reported a single plane circling the formation at a distance of fifty miles\* whereas the other task groups reported no contacts at this time. It is concluded therefore that but one of the above contacts was real; the other two being "phantoms."

Between 0500 and 0530 he knew that certain of his searches were departing from their bases:

(1) At 0500 seven two-engine land bombers of the 763rd Air Group took off from Kanoya to search the sector  $137\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ - $207\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ (T) to a distance of 650 miles.\*\*

(2) At 0530 five search planes took off from Okinawa. Two of these were two-engine land bombers of 405th and 406th Attack Units which had been ordered to search the sector  $157^{\circ}$ - $178^{\circ}$ (T) to 500 miles; the remaining three, carrier type reconnaissance planes of THIRD and FOURTH Reconnaissance Units which had been ordered to cover the sector  $178^{\circ}$ - $209^{\circ}$ (T) to 400 miles.\*\*\*

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\* War Diary BOSTON, October 16th, 1944.

\*\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 151933, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 161044.

\*\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch, SigOrd 33, October 15th, 1944, WDC Document 160137.



For reasons not known, the search from Garan Bi which had been ordered to depart at dawn was delayed for some three hours. Since Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was at Takao he must have been aware of this delay. If the delay could have been avoided it should have been, since, by not searching the areas assigned at the same time that the other areas were being searched, the search could thereby have been made ineffective. There were known to be at least two or three enemy carriers off Formosa with their last reported positions but 200 miles east of that island, and in view of the night radar contacts and the delayed reports from the previous day there were probably other carriers there as well. Some of these carriers were therefore in good position to launch dawn air strikes against Formosa bases. In cases of this kind prudence dictates that searches be made as early as possible and in as good coordination as possible to provide maximum warning against such an attack, and to provide early information as to the location of the enemy carriers so that own attack groups may depart advantageously.

At about 0630 Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla commenced launching his attack from Kyushu. The attack group comprised forty-seven carrier type fighters from the 252nd and 341st Air Groups, and forty-five carrier type bombers and seven carrier type attack planes from the 701st and 752nd Air Groups - a total of ninety-nine aircraft. He directed the attack group to stage through Okinawa and then to attack the stricken enemy task group last reported at 1010 the previous morning in Latitude 22°-05'N, Longitude 124°-55'E.\* As noted earlier this group was actually TG 30.3.

At 0821 he issued additional orders to his command. Stating that about six enemy carriers were still operating east of Formosa and more than six others were operating east of Luzon, he ordered (a) the SIXTH Base Air Force to regroup its strength and to launch an all-out attack to assure victory, and (b) all units to advance in full strength to Formosa and take positions for the SHO Operation's decisive battle.\*\*

This order indicates that in the mind of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force the battle was entering a new phase. Until now he had been engaged in

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\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 161857, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160258.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 160821, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 63) WDC Document 160258.



making repeated attacks on the enemy task force east of Formosa in order to destroy that force as he had been ordered to do. At first he had believed that he had at least nearly succeeded in accomplishing his objective, but now he knew that, while he had undoubtedly sunk some ships, the enemy still possessed effective fighting strength. However he also knew that the enemy had not attacked Formosa for forty-eight hours and seemingly had taken a more defensive attitude in that area. This change he now may well have attributed to a desire on the part of the enemy commander to cover the withdrawal of his damaged units, while at the same time, preparing to move his area of operations to the Philippines. This latter move had been plainly indicated by the presence of the two four-carrier task groups which had been observed off Luzon on the previous day. Such a shift in areas by the enemy had been predicted by CinC, Combined Fleet before the battle had been joined.\*

At the same time he realized that, as a result of fatigue and progressively growing disorganization, his own command was fast losing its value as an effective force. Time for regrouping was essential if this was to be regained. While it is clear that he did not intend to cancel his strikes planned for this day, he probably considered that should the enemy move further to the eastward such opportunities to attack would lessen, and time might be available for reorganization.

The decision to complete the movement of his forces to Formosa at this time and to prepare for decisive battle seems sound, since it seems logical to assume that not only had the Allied operations of the past six days indicated rather clearly that if such a landing were to come it would be in either the SHO One or SHO Two areas, but also these were the areas which had been alerted by CinC Combined Fleet at 1214, October 10th, and subsequent events had brought forth no change by that commander. It will be recalled that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had been in the process of moving his headquarters and his command to Formosa when the Allied task force had struck Okinawa on October 10th. Thereafter he had continued this deployment as much as possible by directing his attack groups from Kyushu to land on Formosa after their attacks. However, it was evident that this method of deploying had resulted in scattering his units with a consequent breakdown in his organization. Now by bringing down all of his remaining units and concentrating them at designated bases he planned to effect the needed reorganization.

At 0847 the search planes from southern Formosa finally took off.\*\* This flight, which completed his planned searches, was ordered to cover the sector from Garan Bi between  $063^{\circ}$ - $130^{\circ}$ (T) to a distance of 400

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\* Situation Estimates at the Start of the Enemy Invasion of Palau and Halmahera, September 17th, 1944, Combined Fleet Headquarters, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-26, Item 3.

\*\* Merit Report 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.



miles.\* Except for the delay in take off from southern Formosa, the plan and its execution appear to have been generally adequate. The search provided for maximum coverage by planes from both Okinawa and Formosa, of the area to the east of Formosa, where TF 38 had been operating, and for some added coverage of that area, and farther to the east, by planes from Kanoya. It did leave uncovered the area directly east of Kyushu. This area was very possibly covered by Honshu aircraft but information thereon is not available to this study.

During the morning, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force acted to replenish his aircraft on Formosa.\*\* He realized that this operation would probably require several days since the aircraft would presumably require ferrying from Japan and would probably take at least a few days to arrive.\*\* He also directed, at 0916, that (a) base material required by all forces be rapidly moved to Formosa and (b) the "T" Force remaining in Kyushu reorganize and then move up to Tainan.\*\*\*

At about 0950 he received the first day search contact. A Garan Bi search plane of the Tainan Air Group reported sighting at 0920 two carriers and four battleships at Latitude 21°-05'N, Longitude 124°-25'E on a southeasterly course and a second group comprising two battleships, four cruisers, and five to six destroyers about twenty miles to the east of the first group.\*\*\*\* This was a sighting of TG 30.3. At this time one unit of this group (TU 30.3.1) was composed of five cruisers, including two damaged and under tow, eight destroyers and two fleet tugs. About ten miles to the east was the other unit (TU 30.3.2) comprising two light carriers, two cruisers, and five destroyers. The position of TU 30.3.1 was actually about thirty miles east of the position reported in the contact. The contact report had reversed the actual relative positions of the two units. The reported position was only about sixty miles south of the location of a group of damaged ships which at 0920 the previous morning had been reported as making practically no headway. Commander SIXTH Base Air Force probably correctly decided that this was the same group, and that it was this group which Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla's forces had been directed to attack. Actually TG 30.3 had been proceeding on a course of 130°(T) at about three and a half knots during the preceding twenty-four hours.

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 151855, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 59), WDC Document 160137.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 160916, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 63), WDC Document 160258.

\*\*\*\* Merit Report, 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.



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Shortly after this (at about 1030), Commander SIXTH Base Air Force ordered his attack group in southern Formosa to attack the enemy force sighted at 0920. At about the same time he may have learned of a second contact. An aircraft reported sighting an enemy group which included four carriers 600 miles northeast of Manila.\* The time of the contact and the base from which the reporting aircraft came are not indicated in the data available. What his evaluation of this contact was is not known but it may have appeared to him to be the same group which had attacked Manila and had been attacked in return by Army and Navy planes from the Philippines on the previous day, rather than the group which had been reported as bearing 055°(T), distant 600 miles from Manila. This seems logical since this group was the group most likely to be within range by morning whereas the other group could well have moved beyond search range by this time. While this new position was nearly 400 miles further to the northeast it could easily have been covered in twenty-four hours at about seventeen knots. He probably noted that this group had four carriers while the pilots from the Philippines had claimed sinking one of the four carriers attacked the day before. With his recent experience with pilots' reports fresh in his mind he would have had no difficulty reconciling this apparent discrepancy. This was actually a sighting of TG 38.1 which at this time comprised three carriers, the COWPENS having been detached to join TG 30.3. The approximate position of TG 38.1 was 590 miles bearing 053°(T) from Manila in an area covered by search planes from both Okinawa and Kanoya.

Thus far in the morning it probably appeared to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force that the above two contacts were as he expected. Both contacts appeared to represent relocations of the two-carrier group, and of one of the two four-carrier groups which had been sighted the previous day; the first contact being east of Formosa and the second being northeast of Manila. The first group appeared to be continuing its withdrawal at very slow speed; the second group which had attacked Manila (TG 38.4) the previous morning appeared to have withdrawn at high speed, possibly to add covering strength to the first group which included damaged units. He had already ordered his attack forces in Kanoya and on Formosa to strike the slow moving two-carrier group. There still remained unlocated two other groups. These were (a) the group which had first been reported the previous morning as having five carriers and then later the same morning as comprising three carriers, and (b) the four carrier group reported the previous day as bearing 055°(T), distant 600 miles from Manila. Where were these groups?

The detection of these groups was particularly important in view of the present operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force. The data

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.



available does not indicate that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received any orders to provide protective searches for this surface force, but it would appear probable that his searches for the 16th were determined with this purpose in view. It must have been evident that the SECOND Striking Force, with no carriers, could safely operate east of Formosa and sink the Allied cripples in that area, only if it could avoid contact with superior enemy forces. In order to do this Commander SIXTH Base Air Force would be required to ascertain the locations not only of all enemy carrier groups, but of enemy surface units as well.

At about 1100, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force received his third and most important contact of the day. A search plane reported sighting at 1030 an enemy task group in Latitude 21°-50'N, Longitude 127°-50'E composed of seven carriers, seven battleships, and more than ten cruisers and destroyers. This group was on a westerly course.\* This was a sighting of TG 38.2 and TG 38.3 which were actually about twenty miles north-east of the position reported. TG's 38.2 and 38.3 were comprised at this time of eight carriers and six battleships so that this contact was unusually accurate. From what base the reporting aircraft had departed is not known, but the location was in an area covered by searches from Garan Bi, Okinawa and Kanoya.

Since this contact was much larger than any contact heretofore made and since it was in a position where it was easily possible that the two task groups heretofore unlocated might well have rendezvoused and formed one composite group it seems clear that Commander SIXTH Base Air Force decided that this had in fact occurred.

Commander SIXTH Base Air Force now knew that a strong Allied carrier force of some eleven carriers was operating in an area only about 260 miles south of Okinawa, with two more carriers in the damaged ship group about 180 miles west by south of them. He took no action to divert to this more lucrative and menacing target either the attack of Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla, which had been launched from Kyushu at 0630 or the attack which he had ordered at about 1030 to take off from Formosa. As noted earlier this failure to attack undamaged carriers rather than to sink ships possibly already damaged was not sound. Perhaps he felt that the effectiveness of his disorganized units was such that he could no longer afford the results of sending them against powerful opposition and must be satisfied to direct them against units already reduced in defensive power.

Also at about 1100 he knew that CinC, Combined Fleet had arrived at Takao and had shifted his headquarters to that location from Shinchiku.\*\*

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\* CofS Combined Fleet Dispatch 161226, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, WDC Document 161638.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161151, October 1944 to All Flag Officers, Combined Fleet, WDC Document 161638.



This change, putting his superior in the same location as he, would facilitate discussion of the situation and exchange of information.

At about this same time he probably learned that Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla's attack group, comprising ninety-nine aircraft, had not attacked. The attack had been cancelled and the aircraft had been ordered to proceed to Formosa.\* The reason for this is not known nor does the data indicate whether or not Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew of this cancellation before it had been made effective. While there were scattered showers in the area with ceilings of 1600-2500 feet and a visibility 5-10 miles,\*\* which conditions might have caused difficulty in locating the enemy they were not sufficient to have caused the cancellation.

At about 1135 he likely learned that another search had departed from Kanoya at 1105.\*\*\* Neither the number of planes involved, nor the purpose of this search, nor the sector to be searched is indicated in the data available. However, analysis indicates that this may have been the search unit in advance of a "T" Force attack group from Kyushu. It will be recalled that the "T" Force (a) had been ordered to attack the enemy two carrier group the previous day but had not taken off and (b) had received new orders to make such an attack on this day.\*\*\*\*

At this same time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew that the attack group which he had ordered to depart from Formosa and attack the damaged enemy group including two carriers which had been sighted at 0920 had become airborne. This group was comprised of forty-four carrier-type fighters, thirty-seven carrier-type bombers, eighteen carrier-type attack planes, and eight two-engine land bombers. This was a total of 107 aircraft,\*\*\*\*\* from at least six different air groups.

Probably at about this same time he learned that Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla was sending out a special search. A single carrier-type reconnaissance plane had been directed to proceed from Okinawa on course 220°(T) for 305 miles and then search from that point a circle of eighty miles radius.\*\*\*\*\* Since the center of this circle was some 210

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\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 161857, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160258.

\*\* Report of Action during the period 1400, October 15th to 2230 October 17th, 1944, COWPENS, Serial 0027, October 17th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary 12th Reconnaissance Unit, Kanoya Detachment, October 12th-15th, 1944, WDC Document 160381.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 151855, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 59), WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch SigOrd 34, October 1944.



miles west of the reported locations of eleven carriers and seventy miles northwest of the 0920 position of two carriers which were retiring, it is not clear for what purpose this special search was being made. Possibly some indication of an enemy force in that area had been received.

At about 1209 he received additional orders from CinC, Combined Fleet. At that time CinC, Combined Fleet, estimating that the enemy was apparently concentrating to protect his damaged ships, stated that it was not impossible that the enemy might counterattack, and ordered the base air forces to clarify the enemy situation, concentrate their strength, and pursue and destroy the enemy.\* While these orders represented no change from what Commander SIXTH Base Air Force was already doing, they did permit him to concentrate his forces before again attempting to destroy the enemy, which concentration he had already ordered.

About this time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew that (a) his searches, except the one launched from Kanyoa at 1105 and the single plane from Okinawa, had returned to base, or would shortly, and (b) except for the thirteen enemy carriers no other contacts had been reported.

At about 1256 he received information that the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet, had directed the SECOND Striking Force, which until then was proceeding to engage the crippled enemy ships east of Formosa, to change course to the northwest and retire. This order was issued as a result of the 1030 sighting of seven carriers in the area proceeding westward toward the two carrier group.\*\* Apparently the Chief of Staff had not as yet received the report of four additional carriers 600 miles northeast of Manila.

At about 1300 he commenced receiving reports of Allied B-29's over southern Formosa. During the ensuing forty minutes he learned that (a) twenty-eight B-29's had been over Tainan and had been intercepted by defending fighters of the Tainan Air Group and driven off, (b) a total of seventy B-29's had been over Takao and had been intercepted by fighters of the Takao Air Group and driven off, and (c) that his fighters made no claims of enemy aircraft shot down.\*\*\* These attacks were actually made by fifty-nine B-29's of the TWENTIETH Bomber Command which on this day had attacked targets in southern Formosa and dropped 369.4 tons of bombs. The B-29's reported that (a) a total of fifty-one attacks by defending interceptors had been made against them with resulting

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161209, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, etc. (Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd 11), WDC Document 160264.

\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161226, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, etc., WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\* Merit Report, 14th Combined Air Group, Formosa Air Battle, October 10th-17th, 1944, WDC Document 161012.



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damage to two B-29's, (b) two more B-29's had received minor damage from AA fire, and (c) three interceptors had been shot down and three more probably destroyed.\*

At about this same time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that a small attack group composed of twelve carrier type fighters and three land attack planes\*\* which had taken off at 1230 had engaged the attacking B-29's instead of the enemy task force. Presumably when the fighters engaged the B-29's, the attack planes, without an escort, returned to base.

This action of the commander of this attack group in changing his objective from the destruction of enemy carriers to the destruction of the B-29's arose, of course, from the demands of the situation. But there is considerable doubt as to the correctness of his decision since (a) there were many B-29's, (b) there were a number of carriers, (it is doubtful if the pilots of the interceptors knew how many, but they had reason to believe only a few), (c) the attack by B-29's was expected, and (d) no orders changing the pilot's targets appear to have been issued by the immediate superior. The destruction of the carriers was a strategic objective which would, if accomplished, prevent an invasion; the destruction of one or more B-29's was a purely tactical objective which contributed little or nothing to the strategic plan.

By early afternoon Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had become concerned over the movements of the eleven carriers reported earlier south of Okinawa. He knew that most of his searches had returned. He had received reports that weather in the area, showers and fairly low ceilings, might make visual sighting difficult. He realized that this strong carrier force could attack the Nansei Shoto this afternoon or even make a long-range fighter sweep of Formosa by late afternoon. It could be in position to conduct heavy attacks on either base by the next morning. Accordingly, at 1326 he ordered that a flying boat of the 801st Air Group carry out a radar search for the enemy task force to the west of Longitude 129°00'E and north of Latitude 20°00'N.\*\*\* The location of the 801st Air Group at this time is not known, but it was probably Kyushu or Okinawa. By this order he indicated that he correctly appreciated the capabilities of the enemy task force, but he did not indicate why he ordered that the search be conducted by a single plane rather than by two or more planes.

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\* 20th Bomber Command Mission Reports Nos. 11 and 12, October 28th, 1944.

\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 161326, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force and Commander SW Area Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 65), FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.

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Perhaps he learned at about this time, that Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla at Okinawa planned to send out at 1400 two carrier type reconnaissance planes (a) to cover the sector  $194^{\circ}$ - $214^{\circ}$ (T) from that base to a distance of 300 miles and (b) to locate the seven carrier group last sighted at 1030 and to maintain contact until dusk.\* Since the eastern limit of this Okinawa search was some 160 miles west of Longitude  $129^{\circ}$ E, it is clear that the area between the Okinawa search and Longitude  $129^{\circ}$ - $00'$ E could be covered by one radar equipped plane if its radar obtained the maximum expected range of detection. However, since recent experience had indicated that the enemy had frequently shot down search planes before the pilots had been able to send a contact report, the necessity for employing more than one plane on such an important search seems obvious.

By 1400 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force knew that his command was making good progress in regrouping and would be capable of increasing its offensive effort by the next day. He also knew that, while it was possible that the enemy task force might counterattack to cover withdrawal of its damaged units, thus offering targets for the base air force, it might not have to do so but might instead prefer to maintain a covering position to the northward of the damaged ships. Since the damaged ships were slowly withdrawing to the southeast it was clear that while such action would soon place the enemy task force beyond effective range from Formosa bases, it might not place them beyond effective range from Okinawa. In order to be ready for such an eventuality, he at 1407, alerted his forces to the possibility of moving to Okinawa and attacking the enemy from there. He tentatively designated the airfields on Okinawa at which his various units would base.\*\* This warning to his forces of possible future operations was sound and indicated that, while Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had recognized the need for regrouping his forces, he did not intend to abandon the attack but rather intended to resume offensive operations as soon as possible.

At about 1415 he presumably learned that at 1340 the "T" Force Attack Group had taken off from Kyushu to attack the two carrier group. This attack group was composed of eight land bombers and twenty attack planes\*\*\* and was taking off in accordance with the orders he had issued the previous night. At the same time he learned that Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla at Kanoya had directed his units to move up to Formosa

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch SigOrd 35, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 160137.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 161407, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



as rapidly as possible.\*

At about 1430 he learned, by flash reports, of the results of the 107 plane attack group which had departed from Formosa to attack the enemy two carrier group. The thirty-seven carrier type bombers of the 103rd Attack Unit had become separated from the rest of the aircraft en route to the target and had failed to sight the enemy.\*\* Between 1330 and 1400 the remaining attack group had been intercepted by enemy fighters. The 256th Attack Unit claimed shooting down seven of these,\*\*\* the 203rd Air Group five more\*\*\*\* for a total of twelve enemy fighters destroyed. The group had continued on and had attacked the enemy task group, reportedly damaging and setting afire one carrier and also damaging one battleship.\*\*\*\*\* In this action the Japanese lost twenty-seven of the seventy planes which attacked.\*\*\*\*\*

The group attacked was TG 30.3 which had detected the approaching planes by radar at a range of eighty miles. The attack had been intercepted by fighters from the CABOT and COWPENS who claimed shooting down forty-one Japanese planes without the loss of any defending fighters. No planes had attacked the carrier unit of TG 30.3 but three land-bombers carrying torpedoes succeeded in breaking through to attack the cruiser unit.\*\*\*\*\* All three of these had been shot down by AA fire but not before one had scored at 1348 one torpedo hit in the already damaged HOUSTON.\*\*\*\*\*

Possibly at about this same time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that a twenty-two plane attack which had been launched from the

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- \* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 161343, October 1944 to Commanders 21st and 25th Air Flotillas, Commander 203rd Air Group, Commanders SIXTH and SEVENTH Base Air Forces, WDC Document 160258.
  - \*\* War Diary Kokubu Detachment, 103rd Attack Unit, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 160258.
  - \*\*\* War Diary Katori Detachment 752nd Air Group, 256th Attack Unit, SHO Operations, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 161634.
  - \*\*\*\* War Diary 203rd Air Group, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 161633.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 263rd Attack Unit (653rd Air Group) SHO Operations October 14th-21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report CABOT, Air Cover for Task Group 30.3 from October 14th to October 18th, 1944, Serial 063, October 18th, 1944.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Action Report HOUSTON, Report of Action Occurring on October 16th, 1944, Serial 0135, October 29th, 1944.



Philippines had failed to find a target and had returned to base.\*

At about 1630 he presumably learned that the two search planes which Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla at Okinawa had planned to send out at 1400 had been delayed in take off and had not departed the Oruku base until 1600.\*\*

At about 1730 he learned that Imperial General Headquarters had made two public announcements to the effect that already in the battle Japanese forces had sunk eleven carriers, two battleships, three cruisers, and one destroyer, and had damaged six carriers, two battleships, four cruisers, and eleven undetermined types.\*\*\* Whether or not he approved of such gross exaggeration of the facts, even in order to stimulate public morale, is not known.

At about 1800 he was informed that the Kanoya search, which had departed that base at 1105 and presumably was the search unit of the "T" Force attack group, had landed at Okinawa at 1725 having made no contacts.\*\*\*\* At about the same time he probably learned that the "T" Force attack group which had taken off at 1320 had failed to locate a target and had returned to base.\* Why this attack had failed to locate the enemy is not understood for, as noted previously, the weather in the area should not have prevented detection of the enemy task force. This is particularly true in the case of the "T" Force for it will be recalled that this force was specially trained for attack under low visibility conditions.

At 1815 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force who, in addition to watching the enemy situation and launching attacks, had been concerned in re-grouping his forces, directed Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla at Shinchiku and Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla at Okinawa to return all aircraft of the "T" Force which were then under their command or present in their areas\*\*\*\*\* to Commander "T" Force.

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\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* Detailed Action Reports of 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944 - January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\* Diary of Vice Admiral Kimpei Teraoka, IJN, August 1st-November 1st, 1944, FIFTH Base Air Force in SHO Operation; GHQ-FEC Special Historical Collection; Supporting Documents to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's Historical Report on Allied Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area (Item 30, Footlocker 7 of 10, SWPA Series Vol. II); also New York Times, October 17th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary 12th Reconnaissance Unit, Kanoya Detachment, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 160381.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 161815, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 67) FEC Historical Division Microfilm unnumbered.



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At 1835 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force ordered Commander 901st Air Group to launch his night searches as soon as practicable and to search to a radius of 300 miles from Garan Bi.\* The available information does not indicate the bearing limits of this search. His decision to send out such night searches was sound, for as noted earlier, he knew that a strong enemy task force could be in position to attack Formosa at dawn. Why he did not order similar searches from Okinawa and extend the radius of search to provide greater protection is not clear, but it may have been due to non-availability of more long-range radar equipped aircraft.

At about 2000, while completing his plans for the next day's operations, he received Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla's plans for the morning search for the next day wherein that commander had ordered the 763rd Air Group at Kanoya to launch seven two-engine land bombers at 0500 to cover the sector 135°-200°(T) to a distance of 650 miles.\*\*

At about 2030 he learned that the two search planes which had departed from Okinawa at 1600 to locate and track the enemy carriers south of that base had landed at Okinawa at 2000 having made no contact.\*\*\* He also learned about this time that the search plane of the 801st Air Group, which he had ordered at 1326 to search by radar the area east of that covered by the above two planes, returned to base without having made any contacts although TG's 38.1, 38.2, and 38.3 were operating in that area.

At 2117 he issued orders for the next day's operations. He directed that searches be made from Garan Bi covering the sector 065°-159°(T) to 400 miles, and from Kanoya covering the sector 150°-185°(T) to an unspecified radius. Searches in other sectors were to be made as directed by the responsible commanders. He also ordered that, commencing at 0600, all forces were to be ready to take-off for attack on thirty minutes notice.\*\*\*\* Why he reduced the search that Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla had already planned to send out is not known, but it is possible that he desired the maximum number of planes available for attack operations. To reduce this search, however, without specifying that Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla provide adequate coverage of the

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\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 161835, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 68), WDC Document 160369.

\*\* Commander 51st Air Flotilla Dispatch 161923, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force, Information to Commander SECOND Striking Force, WDC Document 161644.

\*\*\* Detailed Action Report of 752nd Air Group Units, June 1944 - January 1945, WDC Document 160364.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 162117, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 69), WDC Document 161644.



areas eliminated from the Kanoya search, appears of doubtful correctness. Since his afternoon searches had failed to reestablish contact with the eleven carriers sighted earlier south of Okinawa, he could not be assured that that force would not strike his bases at dawn. Does it not appear that he might have better provided for the security of his forces had he directed that an integrated search be conducted from both Kanoya and Okinawa to cover the areas of possible approach of the enemy task force? He probably knew at this time that Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla had directed (a) three two-engine land bombers and five carrier type reconnaissance planes to be ready at 0530 to take off for search on fifteen minutes notice, and (b) that by 0545 (1) all operational aircraft on Okinawa were to be prepared to disperse on fifteen minutes notice and (2) all fighters were to be ready for interception operations.\*

Sometime during the evening he learned that Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla at Shinchiku planned to send out three search planes at about 0600 in the morning to cover the sector  $137\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ - $162\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ (T) to an unspecified range.\*\* He also learned that indications of a typhoon rising to the south had been reported and that special units were being readied by the commanders in the Philippines to attack under cover of this bad weather.\*\*\* What other information he had of the weather conditions at the time is not known, but there were heavy squall lines lying across the intertropical front in the area east of Leyte, Samar, and southern Luzon. These had produced bad flying conditions which appeared to have forced cancellation of the Philippine searches on this day. Although he continued to regroup his forces in an endeavor to regain his striking power, he knew that he could not possibly regain the original striking power of his "T" Force, since some three-quarters of that force had already been lost.\*\*\*

(2) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force,  
October 16th.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force had planned to conduct routine searches at dawn as on previous days. However, as dawn approached he received reports of increasingly squally weather in the area east of Samar and Leyte. Several heavy squall lines were moving into that area from the east, and conditions during the day approached typhoon conditions. Whether or not his searches were launched is not known but, if they were, the search aircraft apparently turned back before reaching the limit of their sectors due to weather. There is no indication

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\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch SigOrd 36, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 160137. (Transmitted by telephone.)

\*\* Commander 21st Air Flotilla Dispatch SigOrd 5, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



that his planes reported any contacts although TG 38.4 was this day fueling in an area about 325 miles east of Luzon and the Minesweeper Group (TG 77.5) and Dinagat Attack Group (TG 78.4) of TF 77 were only about 140 miles east of Mindanao proceeding to Leyte Gulf. TG 38.4 was actually in an area of unlimited ceiling and fifteen miles visibility\* but during the entire day detected no enemy aircraft.\*\* The groups east of Mindanao, however, were experiencing heavy rainfall and extremely limited visibility.\*\*\* Why the area northeast of Luzon, where TG 38.4 was operating, was not adequately covered by search planes is not known.

During the morning Commander FIFTH Base Air Force undoubtedly was informed of the contacts made to the eastward of Formosa by the SIXTH Base Air Force. By about 1030 he presumably knew (a) of the two-carrier group reportedly withdrawing from east of Formosa and which was being attacked by the SIXTH Base Air Force and (b) of the four-carrier group 600 miles northeast of Manila. Like Commander SIXTH Base Air Force he probably considered this latter group to be the one which had attacked Manila the day before. Sometime after 1100 he likely learned of the third sighting, this one on a seven-carrier force near the four-carrier group. None of these groups appeared to be menacing the Philippines area at this time. The nearest one, the two-carrier group, was at 420-miles north northeast of Manila. He probably conferred with CG FOURTH Air Army on their joint ability to launch a long-range strike.

At about 1220 he knew that CinC, Combined Fleet had shifted his headquarters from Shinchiku to Takao\*\*\*\* where he would be in close proximity to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. Shortly thereafter at about 1240 he received additional orders from CinC, Combined Fleet. These orders were the same as those issued to Commander SIXTH Base Air Force and directed that the base air forces, while clarifying the enemy situation, concentrate their strength and pursue and destroy the enemy.\*\*\*\*\*

At about 1344 he received word that the 253rd Attack Unit of the THIRD Base Air Force, which was also under command of Commander Southwest

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\* Action Report BELLEAU WOOD, Report of Action Against Nansai Shoto, Formosa, Luzon and Visayas, Philippine Islands, Serial 0170, November 3rd, 1944.

\*\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* Report of Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Straits and Leyte Gulf, Commander MINRON TWO (CTG 77.5), Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161151, October 1944 to Combined Fleet, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161209, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Force, etc. (Combined Fleet Special DesOpOrd 11) WDC Document 160264.



Area Force, had been ordered to Manila and upon arrival was to report to him for duty.\* This dispatch is of interest since it is the first known instance of the employment of the THIRD Base Air Force in this operation.

At sometime during the day, and more probably in the afternoon, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force presumably in cooperation with CG FOURTH Air Army, launched a small strike. The time of take-off and the target of this strike are not known, but it comprised twenty-two planes and failed to find any target.\*\* Except for this one abortive effort it does not appear that the Philippine air forces contributed anything to the general offensive on this day. This was probably due, at least in part, to the long range to the nearest reported enemy group which, because of a shortage of long-range planes in the Philippines, limited attacks to that attempted above. In anticipation of a worsening of the weather over the entire area and the possibility of a full typhoon developing, Commander FIFTH Base Air Force readied those of his units which would be able to operate under such conditions for future attacks against any enemy forces.\*\*\*

(d) Operations of CG FOURTH Air Army, October 16th.

As on previous days, CG FOURTH Air Army presumably cooperated closely with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force in his operations on this day. It is not known whether or not he launched those short-range searches for which he was responsible under the joint agreement with the naval commander, but if he did his planes would probably have made no contacts. As noted earlier TG 38.4 was in an area of good flying conditions just beyond the short range search arc of 300 miles from the Philippines, while the groups of TF 77, approaching from the southeast, were in an area of bad flying conditions, well within the range search arc of 300 miles.

CG FOURTH Air Army was undoubtedly informed of the three contacts reported during the morning and probably conferred with Commander FIFTH Base Air Force on what actions could be taken against the enemy task groups. The data available does not indicate whether or not the twenty-two plane abortive attack which was launched from the Philippines was made up of both Army and Navy planes but it would seem likely that it was. Beyond this small effort CG FOURTH Air Army took no active part in the day's operations.

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- \* Commander SW Area Force Dispatch 161314, October 1944 to Commander FIFTH Base Air Force, WDC Document 160354 NA 12378.
  - \*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944 Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.
  - \*\*\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.



During this time he was concerned with plans for the employment of large reinforcements expected from Japan and China. To inform the FOURTH Air Army of changes entailed he issued a tentative order on this date stating that such changes would be made effective on October 25th by subsequent orders.\*

(8) Operations until 0719 October 17th.

(a) Operations of CinC, Combined Fleet.

During the early morning CinC, Combined Fleet at his new headquarters at Takao received two contact reports from a radar equipped flying boat searching to a radius of 290 miles from Garan Bi. This plane reported what appeared to be two separate task groups, one at 0235 in Latitude 19°-05'N, Longitude 125°-15'E and one at 0250 in Latitude 20°-15'N, Longitude 124°-25'E.\*\* As on the previous day it seems likely that CinC Combined Fleet estimated one of these to be the Allied task group retiring slowly to the southeast (TG 30.3).

His estimate of the situation as of this time is not known but it is undoubtedly true that he was greatly concerned since the combat capabilities of the Allies now far exceeded his own. Had he expected an immediate Allied landing somewhere in the Philippine area, it seems reasonable to assume that he would have insured that oilers were available at Brunel, and would have issued instructions to the Main Force to prepare to sortie, and to collect its aircraft not employed in Formosa. On the other hand, it will be shown in a later volume of this study that when the 0719 report of Allied surface forces off Suluan Island was received by him he acted with such despatch (fifty minutes including time of transmission and decoding) as to indicate that he may have expected this very situation to eventuate.\*\*\*

(b) Operations of Commander Mobile Force.

Commander Mobile Force remained ashore at Oita Air Base. Whether, in view of the developing situation, he obtained from the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet that officer's estimate of the situation is not known. However, it seems clear that, as a responsible commander he must have viewed the capabilities of the Allied carrier task force with considerable concern. As early as October 12th he had been advised by the Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet that his carriers would not be required in this operation. It was to be accomplished

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\* FOURTH Air Army Operations Order A-497, October 16th, 1944, Documents from File of Lieutenant Colonel Katsuo Sato, IJA, Staff Officer, FOURTH Air Army, Department of the Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.

\*\* Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group Night Searches, October 10th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551 NA 12402.

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 170809, October 1944, to all Flags Combined Fleet (Special DesOpOrd 14) WDC Document 161636.



entirely by land-based air forces.\* He was not so sure now that this condition would still obtain since the thirteen carriers contacted on the preceding day showed conclusively that the land-based air forces had failed. The situation had obviously changed radically. He probably wondered whether or not his carriers would now be required even though almost completely defenseless as regards carrier-based air power.

At 0633, noting that the SUZUTSUKI had been torpedoed off the east coast of Kyushu, he directed her to proceed to Kure and to transfer there to the SUGI the personnel and supplies she was transporting to Takao. He also directed the SUGI and the WAKATSUKI to then proceed to Takao.\*\*

(1) Operations of Commander FIRST Striking Force.

Commander FIRST Striking Force remained in his flagship, the heavy cruiser ATAGO at Lingga. His command had been reported ready for sea with the exceptions of the NOSHIRO and AOBA and about ten seaplanes which were at Singapore, and the HAYASHIMO and AKISHIMO which were approaching Manila. It seems logical to assume that he viewed the developing situation with intense interest since his orders to be prepared to sortie definitely forecast some immediate action for his force.

(2) Operations of Commander Main Force.

Commander Main Force, who it will be remembered was also Commander Mobile Force, remained ashore at Oita Air Base. Naturally the comments concerning the reactions of Commander Mobile Force are equally applicable to Commander Main Force.

(3) Operations of Commander SECOND Striking Force.

Commander SECOND Striking Force with the SECOND Striking Force, less HAYSUHARU and USHIO had at 2400, October 16th, passed Amami O Shima and headed into the East China Sea.

The HATSUHARU proceeded independently. Her movements after 2315, October 16th and until 0719 October 17th, are not available but it appears that she moved in a northerly direction for a time.

The USHIO remained on special communications duty to the south of Amami O Shima with orders to rejoin during the 17th.\*\*\* This duty was completed at 0200 and the USHIO rejoined the SECOND Striking Force at 0615 in Latitude 29°-00'N, Longitude 128°-53'E.\*\*\*\*

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\* Letter from Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, IJN, to Mr. Clarke H. Kawakami, World War II Battle Evaluation Group, U.S. Naval War College, undated but about May 23rd, 1952.

\*\* Commander Mobile Force dispatch 170633 October 1944 to WAKATSUKI, SUZUTSUKI, SUGI, etc., WDC Document.

\*\*\* War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\*\* War Diary DESDIV 7 (USHIO), October 1944, WDC Document 161717 NA 11801.



The SECOND Striking Force remained to the northwest of Amami O Shima during the night and at 0719, was in approximate position Latitude 29°-05'N, Longitude 128°-35'E.

(c) Operations of the Base Air Forces until 0719, October 17th.

(1) Operations of Commander SIXTH Base Air Force.

During the night of October 16th-17th, Commander SIXTH Base Air Force conducted continuous searches employing radar equipped flying boats of the 801st\* and 901st\*\* Air Groups.

Shortly after midnight he reviewed his plans for the dawn searches and then made a modification to the proposed search from Shinchiku. He had been informed by Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla that the search would depart at about 0600 and cover the sector 133°-164°(T).\*\*\* He now, at 0108, in order to better coordinate this search with the night searches underway, directed that commander to change the time of departure to 0400 and to make the search radius 250 miles.\*\*\*\* Why he set the search radius at 250 miles is not clear since the land attack planes of the 708th Attack Unit at Shinchiku, which were being used for search, were capable of flying a radius of over 750 miles. Perhaps his principal concern was the possibility of dawn carrier attacks on Formosa.

Sometime during the early morning he learned that Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla had ordered his search planes now on fifteen minutes notice after 0530\*\*\*\*\* to take off at 0600 and to cover the sector from Okinawa between bearing 115°-185°(T) to 400 miles except within the sector 145°-165°(T) wherein the range was to be 500 miles.\*\*\*\*\*

About this time he received two contact reports from a radar equipped flying boat on what appeared to be two separate task groups; one at 0235 in

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 161835, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 68), WDC Document 160369.

\*\*\* Commander 21st Air Flotilla Dispatch SigOrd 5, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\* Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Dispatch 170108, October 1944 to SIXTH Base Air Force (SIXTH Base Air Force DesOpOrd 70), WDC Document 160579.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch SigOrd 35, October 16th, 1944, WDC Document 160137.

\*\*\*\*\* Commander 25th Air Flotilla Dispatch SigOrd 37, October 17th, 1944, WDC Document 160137.



Latitude 19°-05'N, Longitude 125°-15'E and one at 0250 in Latitude 20°-15'N, Longitude 124°-25'E.\* As on the previous day, he likely estimated that one of these contacts was on the Allied task group retiring slowly to the southeast (TG 30.3). If this was his evaluation it was correct since units of that group reported radar contact on an enemy plane which at this time operated in the vicinity for a period of some hours.\*\*

In addition he may have evaluated the other contact as either the seven carrier group (TG's 38.2 and 38.3) or the four carrier group (TG 38.1).

Regardless of his evaluation, he was relieved, at least temporarily, to see that the enemy group were far enough from Formosa and Okinawa as to make dawn strikes unlikely. If he were not attacked, it would give him sorely needed time to reorganize his forces and further their deployment to Formosa.

Actually only TG 30.3 was within the search area of the flying boat as TG's 38.1, 38.2 and 38.3 were operating some 420 miles from Garan Bi.

At 0500 Commander FIFTY-FIRST Air Flotilla commenced launching his morning search from Kanoya. This search which he had planned at 1923 the night before, was to cover the sector 135°-200°(T) to a radius of 650 miles.\*\*\*

At about the same time Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that the two search planes which he had directed to take off from Shinchiku at 0400 had not departed at that time. The first plane of this search actually took off at 0445 to search the sector 149°-164°(T) to 250 miles. The second of the two planes, this one to cover the adjoining sector 133°-149°(T) was further delayed due to engine trouble and finally took off at 0700.\*\*\*\* Presumably he was informed of these modifications.

At 0600 Commander TWENTY-FIFTH Air Flotilla at Okinawa commenced launching his search in accordance with the plans communicated to him earlier that morning by Commander SIXTH Base Air Force. Also at 0600 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force learned that (a) Commander TWENTY-FIRST Air Flotilla, who was having trouble launching his two-plane sector search, had launched an additional search of two land reconnaissance planes to search the area north of a bearing of 067°(T) through Garan Bi and west of a bearing of 130°(T) through Kiirun, and (b) in accordance with his orders issued the previous evening, an attack group at southern

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\* Detailed Action Report 901st Air Group Night Searches October 10th-28th, 1944, WDC Document 160551 NA 12402.

\*\* War Diary COWPENS, October 17th, 1944.

\*\*\* Commander 763rd Air Group Dispatch 171822 October 1944 to Sixth Base Air Force. Detailed Action Report No. 2 Northern Attack Force, Second Base Air Force October 10th-November 15th, 1944, WDC Document 161645 NA 12262.

\*\*\*\* Shinchiku Air Base Dispatch 171352, October 1944 to Authorized Ships, WDC Document 160579.



Formosa bases had assumed an alert status prepared to take off on thirty minutes notice. This group comprised fifty carrier-type fighters as a fighter striking unit, thirty-eight fighters as escort, and forty land bombers and eight carrier-type attack planes as an attack unit, a total of 136 planes.\*

At 0710 he knew that the search he had ordered from Garan Bi had commenced taking off. However many delays occurred so that the last plane of this search did not take off until some fifty minutes later.\*\* These delays had an adverse effect on the effectiveness of the entire search plan, for the Garan Bi search was one which would cover at least a part of the most probable area of contact. The sectors as laid down from the various bases generally covered the area adequately providing they were covered at the same time. This delay would permit an enemy force originally in an area to be covered from Garan Bi to move from the area before the Garan Bi search arrived, into an area already covered by the Okinawa search.

By 0719 Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had reason to believe that his searches from Kanoya, Okinawa and Shinchiku, were underway and that his searches from Garan Bi were also underway although in a somewhat staggered manner. He awaited reports from these searches but, as of this time, none had been received. Meanwhile his forces were continuing their deployment to Formosa, and effecting the regrouping necessary to regain their combat effectiveness.

## (2) Operations of Commander FIFTH Base Air Force.

Commander FIFTH Base Air Force presumably launched at dawn at least some of those searches for which he was responsible. He knew that the weather was still undesirable to bad in the area east of Leyte and Samar but that it was better east of northern Luzon.

At about 0615 the four hecklers which CTG 38.4 had launched at 0440,\*\*\* should have been over Legaspi. There is, however, no information available which shows that they had been observed. Certainly Commander FIFTH Base Air Force appears to have been unaware of their presence.

By 0719 he had received no contact reports. He awaited development of the current situation while endeavoring to increase the readiness of his command.

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Detailed Action Report No. 1, 263rd Attack Unit (653rd Air Group), SHO Operations, October 14th-21st, 1944, WDC Document 161004.

\*\*\* War Diary CTG 38.4, October 17th, 1944.



## (d) Operations of CG FOURTH Air Army.

CG FOURTH Air Army had also probably launched at least some of the short-range searches for which he was responsible. At 0719 he awaited the developments while directing his efforts toward increasing his combat readiness.

## (3) Discussion of Losses of Japanese Aircraft October 10th - 0719 October 17th.

## (a) SIXTH Base Air Force

At the time of the initial Allied attack against Okinawa on October 10th, the Commander SIXTH Base Air Force had assigned to him 737 aircraft of all types. Subsequently he received as reinforcements 688 additional planes, making an aggregate of 1425. Based on an over-all availability factor of sixty per cent, as derived from Japanese statistics and as shown under "Japanese Land Based Aircraft," 855 of this total number of aircraft were actually operational and ready for combat. A SIXTH Base Air Force staff officer estimated that the "T" Force had lost three-fourths of its operational aircraft and the other units about one-third.\* The application of these respective loss factors to the 130 operational aircraft of the "T" Force and the 725 operational aircraft comprising the other units of the SIXTH Base Air Force indicates that about 97 planes were lost by the "T" Force and about 241 were lost by the remaining units, for a total of about 338. However, Japanese records\*\* place the actual losses for the "T" Force at 118. Using this figure (118) in lieu of the 97 computed in accordance with the staff officer's estimate gives a total loss of 359 aircraft. Reports from ten different units of the SIXTH Base Air Force indicate that during this period about 350 operational aircraft were destroyed, presumably in the air. Since the 350 figure approximates the mean of 338 and 359, and is also substantiated to a certain degree by the SIXTH Base Staff Officer,\* who placed the approximate total losses at 300, it will be accepted for this analysis. Therefore, an over-all loss factor of 41% (350/855) is established.

By subtracting the 350 operational losses from the total number of 855 operational aircraft, a figure of 505 planes is obtained as the operational strength on October 17th. Of this number, there were 250 planes operational on Formosa.\* Others remained in Nansei Shoto and Kyushu, but

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\* Memorandum Notes of Captain Bunzo Shibata, IJN, Staff Officer, Second Air Fleet, October 10th-23rd, 1944, Department of the Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-22, Item B.

\*\* Situation of the "T" Attack Force, October 15th, 1944, FEC Microfilm unnumbered, forwarded by Chief, Military History Section, Special Staff, GHQ, FEC, letter of January 10th, 1944 to President, Naval War College.



information on exactly how many is lacking. However, by subtracting the number of planes on Formosa from the total operational strength remaining on October 17th, it would appear that about 255 planes were still operational in those areas.

An estimate of the non-operational aircraft destroyed is obtained by applying the over-all loss factor of forty-one per cent to the 570 planes in this category in the SIXTH Base Air Force. This computation indicates that about 234 planes were destroyed on the ground. This figure added to the 350 operational aircraft losses establishes the total losses for the SIXTH Base Air Force during the period October 10th-17th as 584 planes.

In contrast to the above computed losses of SIXTH Base Air Force planes, COMTHIRDFLT claimed that he had destroyed at Okinawa, Formosa and in the vicinity of TF 38 a total of 906 aircraft (516 in the air and 390 on the ground) during this period.\*

The above computations show that Japanese losses amounted to about sixty-four per cent of the Allied claims. Therefore, this factor will be used in evaluating claims by COMTHIRDFLT later in this discussion, in regard to establishing the operational strengths of the FIFTH Base Air Force and the FOURTH Air Army at 0719, October 17th.

Although the Commander SIXTH Base Air Force still had about sixty per cent of his original number of operational aircraft on October 17th, the combat efficiency of his command had been greatly reduced, and, temporarily at least, had approached zero. His command organization had been disrupted, his units widely scattered, many of his most experienced pilots lost, his material condition deteriorated by lack of spare parts and by intensive operations, and the morale of his personnel seriously impaired. How greatly one or another of these factors contributed to the decline of effectiveness of the SIXTH Base Air Force is not known, but as a result of the air battles during September and early October the Base Air Forces (including the SIXTH Base Air Force) had lost the greater part of the available strength which they had been assiduously building up since August. Consequently, at the crucial moment when the U.S. Forces landed in the Philippines, the strength of the air forces was at its lowest ebb.\*\*

(b) FIFTH Base Air Force and FOURTH Air Army

Japanese documents indicate that the FIFTH Base Air Force had thirty-three operational aircraft and the FOURTH Air Army had sixty-nine operational aircraft as of 1800 October 18th.\*\*\* Since there is no

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\* COMTHIRDFLT Carrier Strikes; operational summary of, Serial 0074, October 27th, 1944.

\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\*\* Urgent Reinforcement Plan of SHO One operation, FEC Microfilm contained in FEC Military History Section letter January 10th, 1952, to President, Naval War College.



information regarding admitted Japanese aircraft losses between 0719 October 17th and 1800 October 18th, the approximate strengths of these units as of 0719 October 17th are derived by (1) taking the number of Japanese aircraft claimed destroyed in the Philippines by the Allies in the air and on the ground (85 and 145, respectively)\* and multiplying by sixty-four per cent to establish actual losses; (2) multiplying the actual ground losses so obtained by the sixty per cent operational factor to obtain the number of operational aircraft destroyed on the ground; (3) adding together the resultant operational ground losses and the air losses (55 and 54); (4) dividing the total by two and adding this figure (54) to the number of operational aircraft in the two forces as of 1800 October 18th (33 and 69, as stated above) to establish the number of operational aircraft as of 0719 October 17th, viz.; FIFTH Base Air Force eighty-seven, FOURTH Air Army 123, a total of 210 operational aircraft. Dividing the total number of operational aircraft in these two units by the sixty per cent operational factor indicates that a total of 350 aircraft were available, distributed as follows: FIFTH Base Air Force 145 planes, FOURTH Air Army 205 planes.

In making the above computations, the following basic considerations apply: (1) losses are distributed evenly between the FIFTH Base Air Force and the FOURTH Air Army, since each started out with about the same number of aircraft (Tables 13 and 14, page 222); (2) all aircraft shot down are operational; (3) sixty per cent of aircraft destroyed on the ground are operational; (4) actual losses are sixty-four per cent of Allied claims; (5) aircraft shot down in the vicinity of the task force are excluded, since it cannot be established whether such aircraft came from the Philippines or from Formosa.

(f) JAPANESE POSITION AT 0719 OCTOBER 17TH.

At 0719 October 17th, the time that the Japanese lookout post at Suluan Island made its contact report on Allied surface forces entering Leyte Gulf, the various Japanese surface forces and groups, less submarines, were located in the following positions:

(a) Combined Fleet.

(1) Mobile Force.

(a) FIRST Striking Force was at Lingga with the exception of the cruisers AOBA and NOSHIRO, which were at Singapore, and the destroyers HAYASHIMO and AKISHIMO which were approaching Manila.

(b) Main Force was at various bases in the Kure area in the Inland Sea. The FUYUTSUKI was under repair at Kure and the SUZUTSUKI was en route Kure for repairs having been torpedoed at 2212 the previous day.

(c) SECOND Striking Force less the HATSU HARU was bearing 305° (T) distant sixty miles from the northern tip of Amami O Shima. The HATSU HARU's position is not definitely known but was presumably south of Kyushu.

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\* Volume II, "Battle for Leyte Gulf," "Operations of CTG 77.4 and CTG 38.4, October 17th, 1944;" also "Operations of CTG 77.4, CTG 38.1, CTG 38.2, and CTG 38.4, October 18th, 1944."



(g) COMPOSITION OF FORCES AND TASKS ASSIGNED (0719, OCTOBER 17th, 1944)

(a) Combined Fleet

(1) Composition of Forces

(a) Mobile Force

(1) Main Force

ZUIKAKU, AMAGI, UNRYU, KATSURAGI	4 CV
ZUIHO, CHITOSE, CHIYODA, RYUHO	4 CVL
HYUGA, ISE	2 BB/XCV
JUNYO	1 XCV

Including elements of 601st, 634th, 653rd air groups\*

OYODO, TAMA	2 CL
SUGI, MOMI, KASHI, KAYA, HINOKI, SHIMOTSUKI, WAKATSUKI, HATSUZUKI, AKITSUKI	9 DD

(2) SECOND Striking Force

NACHI, ASHIGARA	2 CA-
ABUKUMA	1 CL
AKEBONO, USHIO, KASUMI, SHIRANUHI, HATSUHARU, HATSUSHIMO, WAKABA	7 DD

(3) FIRST Striking Force

YAMATO, MUSASHI, NAGATO, FUSO, YAMASHIRO, KONGO, HARUNA	7 BB
ATAGO, TAKAO, CHOKAI, MAYA, MYOKO, HAGURO, MOGAMI, KUMANO, SUZUYA, TONE, CHIKUMA, Aoba	12 CA
NOSHIRO, YAHAGI, KINU	3 CL
SHIMAKAZE, SHIGURE, HAYASHIMO,** AKISHIMO,** KIYOSHIMO, KISHINAMI, OKINAMI, ASASHIMO, NAGANAMI, HAMANAMI, FUJINAMI, MICHISHIO, ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO, NOWAKI, URAKAZE, HAMAKAZE, YUKIKAZE, ISOKAZE, URANAMI, 1 AO	20 DD

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\* Exact strength not known but the minimum figure is not less than 27 planes (601st Air Group); the maximum not more than 116 planes. The reason for this large disparity is that no information is available to this analysis as to the number of planes of the 634th and 653rd Air Groups transferred to the SIXTH Base Air Force in accordance with CinC Combined Fleet's directive of October 12th. It is known, however, that 89 planes of these two air groups were embarked in CARDIV THREE upon its sortie October 20th. Detailed Action Report Main Force SHO One operations, October 20th-29th, 1944, WDC Document 161005, NA 11744.

\*\* En route Manila for temporary duty under COMSOWESAREA Force.



(b) SIXTH Base Air Force

Aircraft available (approximately) 842\*

(c) Advance Expeditionary Force

Submarines available

(1) I-26, I-38, I-41, I-44, I-45, I-46, I-53,  
I-54, I-56, I-177

(2) RO-41, RO-43, RO-46, RO-47, RO-49, RO-50,  
RO-109, RO-112 18

(d) SW Area Force

(1) FIFTH Base Air Force

Aircraft available (approximately) 145\*

(2) Philippine Force

(Composition light combatant forces only)

(e) Anti-submarine Patrol Force

ISUZU	1 CL
YUZUKI, UZUKI, AKIKAZE, KIRI, UME, TAKE, MOMO, MAKI, KUWA	9 DD

Air groups 933 (about 9 planes)

(2) Tasks Assigned

Combined Fleet

To continue present operations to destroy enemy carrier task force (self assigned);\*\* to otherwise assume the strategic defensive until enemy has indicated decisive battle area; prior to decisive battle to reduce approaching enemy by attrition attacks while conserving

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\* Obtained by applying the estimate of operational planes as 60% of total planes available. Thus SIXTH Base Air Force had available 505 or 842 planes and the FIFTH Base Air Force had 87 or 145 planes.  
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\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161209, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, Commander FIFTH Fleet and Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944) WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.

own strength; when decisive battle area has been attacked to assume defensive until enemy is drawn as close as possible; then to destroy: (1) Enemy carriers, (2) Amphibious groups, by concerted and repeated attacks by navy and army forces including air; when other areas are attacked to destroy enemy by naval and air forces locally available (area forces).\*

(a) Mobile Force\*\*

To prepare to destroy damaged ships of TF 38;\*\*\* to destroy enemy task forces and amphibious groups at the forward line of the area selected for the decisive battle employing full strength.

(1) Main Force

To facilitate FIRST Striking Force's penetration of the landing area by diverting Allied task force to northeast, and joining in attack on enemy task force flank. If opportunity arises, to destroy Allied supply force.\*\*

(2) SECOND Striking Force

To prepare to destroy damaged ships of TF 38;\*\*\* to facilitate FIRST Striking Force's penetration of the landing area by diverting Allied task force to northeast, and joining in attack on enemy task force flank. If opportunity arises, to destroy Allied supply force.\*\*

(3) FIRST Striking Force

To prepare to destroy damaged ships of TF 38,\*\*\* when Allied landing plan is determined, to proceed via Brunei or north-central Philippines, aiming to reach landing area at time landing is taking place. In cooperation with base air forces, and avoiding Allied task forces, to engage decisively Allied surface force opposing its advance; thereafter to destroy Allied transports and troops at landing area.\*\*

(b) SIXTH Base Air Force

To continue present all-out air operations to destroy Allied carrier force by air power alone;\*\*\* if Allies attack in

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\* Imperial General Headquarters Navy Directive 431, July 21st, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).

\*\* Mobile Force Operation Order 76, August 10th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39 (Part I) April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Documents).

\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161209, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, Commander FIFTH Fleet and Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (War Diary DESRON 1, October 1944) WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.



decisive battle area, to await approach of invasion forces, drawing major part of Allied strength as near as possible, while concentrating forces; then at a favorable opportunity to engage decisively, destroying Allies in cooperation with all-out concerted attack by friendly air, army and navy forces; to commence all-out attacks on day previous to FIRST Striking Force's penetration of landing area. Priority of targets: (1) carriers, (2) invasion forces.\*

(c) Advance Expeditionary Force\*\*

In event of attack by enemy task forces or amphibious groups, to intercept enemy and gain control of invasion area.

(d) SW Area Force\*\*\*

To secure SW Area in cooperation with the army; to protect sea communications; to destroy Allied shipping and to provide transport as required.

(1) FIFTH Base Air Force

To continue present all-out air operations to destroy Allied carrier force by air power alone;\*\*\*\* if Allies attack in decisive battle area, to await approach of invasion forces, drawing major part of Allied strength as near as possible, while concentrating forces; then at a favorable opportunity to engage decisively, destroying Allies in cooperation with all-out concerted attack by friendly air, army and navy forces; to commence all-out attacks on day previous to FIRST Striking Force's penetration of landing area. Priority of targets: (1) carriers, (2) invasion forces.\*\*\*\*\*

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- \* Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO Operations concluded July 24th, 1944, Supplement to Imperial General Headquarters Navy Section Directive 435, July 26th, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm); also Commander SIXTH Base Air Force Operation Order 6, September 5th 1944, Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-18, Item D.
  - \*\* Combined Fleet Operation Order 87, August 20th, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39 (Part VIII) June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Documents).
  - \*\*\* Combined Fleet Operation Order 84, August 1st, 1944, ATIS Document No. 39 (Part VIII) June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Documents).
  - \*\*\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 161209, October 1944 to Commanders FIFTH and SIXTH Base Air Forces, Commander FIFTH Fleet, and Commander Advance Expeditionary Force (War Diary DESRON 1) WDC Document 161638 NA 11739.
  - \*\*\*\*\* Army-Navy Central Agreement concerning SHO Operations concluded July 24th, 1944, Supplement to Imperial General Headquarters Navy Section Directive 435, July 26th, 1944, WDC Document 216769 (Microfilm).



## (2) Philippine Force

To protect sea communications.\*

## (e) Anti-submarine Patrol Force

To destroy enemy submarines, to provide escorts for Mobile Force and Supply Force and to guard fleet anchorages.\*\*

## (3) Discussion

The Combined Fleet, including its land-based aircraft, was insufficient in strength to accomplish its assigned objectives. It had already failed in its self-assigned objective "the destruction of the Allied carrier force." In this operation it had achieved nothing but negative results. It had lost, in round figures, three-quarters of its "T" Force and one-third of its other base air forces in the SHO One and SHO Two areas without inflicting any important damage against the Allied carrier task force. This made the accomplishment of the objectives for the SHO Operations much more difficult than would have been the case had the Japanese land-based air power, including Army air, not been dissipated against TF 38. The Combined Fleet now was clearly inferior in strength to the Allied forces which CinC, Combined Fleet could estimate might be concentrated against it. This was especially so in carriers (CV's and CVL's) where the ratio was eight (about half of these carriers were new and not ready to sortie) to at least thirteen (since thirteen Allied carriers had been observed the previous day). It was also so in planes since CinC, Combined Fleet could estimate about 845 (13 x 65) planes in the Allied carriers plus an unknown number of shore-based aircraft operating from various bases. Against this Allied air strength, he had available at this time but 987 (842 / 145) land-based aircraft (naval) of which but 592 were operational and about 205 army aircraft of the FOURTH Air Army of which but 123 were operational, plus an unknown but small number of Kyushu-based planes of his three carrier air groups.

A study of the surface strengths available also shows that CinC, Combined Fleet could estimate that the surface strength of the Combined Fleet was likewise not only inferior to the Allied surface strength, but its principal forces were separated by some 2500 miles.

There were thirty-five modern submarines attached to the Advance Expeditionary Force at this time. Of these thirty-five only eighteen (all in the FIRST Submarine Force) were available to the Leyte operation.

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\* Combined Fleet Operation Order 84, August 1st, 1944 ATIS Document No. 39 (Part VIII) June 4th, 1945 (NACHI Documents).

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 070953, September 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders, Combined Fleet DesOpOrd 292, War Diary 23rd Air Flotilla, September 1944, WDC Document 160264 NA 12546.



Four of these (I-26, 45, 54, 56) were en route for operations against TF 38. Twelve (I-38, 41, 44, 46, 53, RO-41, 43, 46, 49, 50, 109, 112) were in the Inland Sea, and two (I-177 and RO-47) were still at sea in the Palau area, apparently having been directed to remain there. The other seventeen submarines were on other duty as follows: seven (I-361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367) in operational transport to by-passed areas; six (I-48, 368, 369, 370, 371, RO-55) in training and shakedown in the Inland Sea; one (I-12) en route west coast; and three (I-36, 37, 47) were being equipped for launching Kaiten (human torpedoes).

(b) Southern Army

(1) Composition of Forces

(a) FOURTEENTH Area Army

(1) SIXTEENTH Division (Leyte)

Total ground troops (plus one tank company)  
(approximately) 16000\*

(b) FOURTH Air Army

Total aircraft (approximately) 205\*\*

(2) Assigned Tasks

(a) FOURTEENTH Area Army

To defend the Philippines

(1) SIXTEENTH Division

To defend Leyte

(b) FOURTH Air Army

To continue present operations to destroy Allied carrier

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\* Report of the Leyte Operation, October 17th-25th, 1944, SIXTH Army 1945, page 34.

\*\* Detailed data regarding total aircraft are not available. It is known that about 123 operational aircraft were available on October 17th. Applying the estimate of operational planes as 60% of the total planes available, the approximate figure of 205 has been arrived at. Since going to press what may be a more correct figure of 105 operational planes rather than the computed 123 has been received. (Daily Record of War Situation Maintained by Captain Kinji Takahashi, IJA, Operations Department, Imperial General Headquarters, Army Section.) This figure which tends to support the mathematical analysis, gives a total of 175 aircraft rather than 205.

force;\* prior to landing operations in cooperation with naval air forces destroy Allied carrier force or, if operating alone, conduct raids on Allied carrier forces, and on Allied air bases and intercept Allied attacks; after landing operations destroy Allied invasion force, especially transports, commencing on day previous to FIRST Striking Force penetration of landing area.\*\*

(3) Discussion

The FOURTH Air Army, with its limited number of planes, (205) even when employed in cooperation with the 145 planes of the FIFTH Base Air Force was inadequate to accomplish its destruction objectives alone since the number of planes in the Allied carrier forces alone (thirteen carriers had been observed) was approximately 845 planes which was much larger than those available in the Philippine area (350).

(h) JAPANESE PLAN

(1) Basic SHO Plan, October 10th.

The basic SHO plan as originally promulgated in July 1944,\*\*\* and as discussed throughout the preceding pages, had as its objective the prevention of an Allied landing through the destruction of the Allied invasion forces in the vicinity of the landing area by a coordinated and sustained air, surface and subsurface attack by all designated units of the Army and the Navy.

This was to be accomplished by:\*\*\*\*

(a) An initial withdrawal and dispersal of the air forces, to reduce losses from Allied task force attacks. During this time the defense against these attacks was to be effected by (1) ground installations (2) small scale air attacks against the Allied task force and (3) interception of the Allied task force by submarines.

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\* FOURTH Air Army Operation Order A-489, October 13th, 1944, file of Lieutenant Colonel Sato, IJA, Department of Army Historical Division Microfilm HS-7.

\*\* Draft Plan of FOURTH Air Army Operations after mid-October, October 15th, 1944, Operations Section, FOURTH Air Army, file of Lieutenant Colonel Sato, IJA, Department of Army Historical Division, Microfilm HS-7.

\*\*\* Outline of Future Army-Navy Operational Policy, July 24th, 1944, Imperial General Headquarters Army and Navy Sectors, WDC Document 216768 (Microfilm).

\*\*\*\* Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944, Section I, General Policy for Operations, paragraph B, page 4, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).



(b) When the Allied landing area had been determined, and while the submarines continued interception operations, all other forces, both Army and Navy, were to concentrate. During this time every effort was to be made to draw the Allied forces as near as possible to the Japanese bases.

(c) On the day prior to the estimated date of Allied landings the air forces were to initiate and maintain full-scale attacks upon both the Allied carrier force and the Allied invasion force while the Main Force of the Mobile Force diverted the Allied carrier force to the north-east (i.e., away from the landing area), and carried out an attack on it from the flank, and

(d) On the date of the Allied landing the FIRST Striking Force was to arrive at the landing area from its advanced base, either Brunei or north-central Philippines and was to destroy first, the enemy surface forces opposing it, and second, the Allied transports. During this time the submarines were to continue their interception operations, the Main Force was to continue its diversion attempts and the air forces were to continue their full-scale attacks. All naval and naval aviation operations were to be coordinated by CinC, Combined Fleet.\*

Although the plan was unsound for a number of reasons, some of which will be discussed later, its chief faults were (a) the necessity for precise coordination and (b) the incorrect objective assigned the FIRST Striking Force. These will be discussed separately.

#### (a) Precise Coordination

The attainment of the precise coordination essential to the success of the plan was of doubtful feasibility under the prevailing situation since, to obtain it, it was necessary that CinC, Combined Fleet have advance information of the movements of the Allied naval and air forces of such exactness that he would be able to move his Main Force from its assigned base (Inland Sea) and his FIRST Striking Force from its assigned base (Lingga-Singapore) in sufficient time to permit their coordination in the objective area at the time of the Allied landing.\*\* In case SHO One were activated this would have required from five to six days, as pointed out by Commander FIRST Striking Force,\*\*\* during which

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\* Commander Mobile Force Operation Order No. 76, August 10th, 1944 Section I, General Policy for Operations, paragraph B, page 4, ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).

\*\* USSBS Interrogation NAV No. 64, Interrogation of Japanese Officials, Interrogation of Rear Admiral Toshitane Takata, IJN, Vol I, page 265.

\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division File 8-5, JS-104.



time the Japanese commander could estimate that the Allied troops and their supplies would have been landed and a large part of the non-combat shipping retired. It is here that the 2500 miles separating the above forces became of such great importance, for the Philippines are about midway between Bungo Suido and Singapore. How CinC, Combined Fleet planned to obtain such information is not known since he did not station his submarines off the most likely departure points for Allied Amphibious Forces such as Manus and Hollandia, and since his air power, based on data available to this study, appears to have been unable to reconnoiter these bases effectively except on rare occasions.

Therefore, the basic plan seems to have been defective in this regard, since the possibility of obtaining definite information was poor until such time as the Allied invasion forces came within the normal search range of Japanese search aircraft - 600 miles in the SHO One and SHO Two areas - or, assuming an average speed of advance for the Allied amphibious forces of about thirteen knots, about two days before the landing. This would make it impossible for either the Main Force or the FIRST Striking Force to arrive in their designated positions on the designated days since their present bases were over twice that distance from the Philippines. In addition the ability of Japanese search aircraft to discover approaching Allied forces, even 600 miles at sea, could be expected to decrease in effectiveness since bad flying weather was to be anticipated during the projected period of the KING II Operation.

(b) Incorrect Objective

The FIRST Striking Force was assigned as its objective (a) the destruction by decisive battle of the Allied support forces (such as the SEVENTH Fleet) which opposed its entry into the landing area and (b) after annihilating these forces, the destruction of the transports and their embarked troops at the landing point (beachhead).<sup>\*</sup> This meant, of course, that Commander FIRST Striking Force was committed to decisive battle should any Allied surface forces interfere. Actually, the assigned objective was incorrect. Should not the proper objective for preventing a landing have been "the destruction of the transports" which transport the ground troops and much of the materials essential for the successful operations of the ground troops, rather than the destruction of the local covering forces by decisive battle? Would it not have been more in keeping with the entire concept of preventing a successful landing to have assigned as the primary objective of the FIRST Striking Force "the destruction of the transports," and to have directed that enemy forces were to be engaged only as necessary to get

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\* Commander Mobile Force Operation Order 76, August 10th, 1944, Section II, Concrete Operational Policy, paragraph A2(a) ATIS Document No. 39, Part I, April 22nd, 1945 (NACHI Document).



at the transports and even then not necessarily in decisive battle since that might endanger seriously the accomplishment of the basic objective? This concept of giving priority to the destruction of the local covering forces in lieu of the transports was also a Japanese command failure at the Battle of Savo Island.

That Commander Mobile Force as a result of war games conducted in early September also had doubts as to the feasibility of the basic SHO plan as presently designed is shown by his recommendations on September 10th: "In view of the situation of the Main Force with respect to air strength, it will be extremely difficult for the Main Force to achieve the expected results in mobile operations at the requisite time to insure the success of the FIRST Striking Force operations." He further said that "It was necessary to augment the surface combat strength of the FIRST Striking Force as much as possible and to, at the same time, provide it with directly cooperating air strength. The present base air forces cannot be counted on to provide any substantially effective direct cooperation . . . there is great probability that the FIRST Striking Force will find itself carrying out its own operations alone and unsupported." He advocated allotting a carrier division to the direct support of the FIRST Striking Force since to that force was assigned the destruction of the Allied surface ships which opposed it, and then the destruction of the Allied transports. Finally, he stated that "In view of the preponderant probability that SHO One Operation will be carried out it is necessary to effect a comprehensive readjustment of the Combined Fleet Operational Plan."\*

(2) Modified SHO Plan, 0719, October 17th.

If this then was the general opinion concerning the feasibility of the basic SHO plan on September 10th, how much more was it so at 0719, October 17th? For the basic SHO plan had now been modified, partially through the will of the commander, and partially through the demands of the situation.

In the first place, it will be remembered that the principal modification due to the will of the commander was occasioned because he (the commander) had decided on October 12th by the employment of the base air forces alone\*\* to attempt to defeat the Allied task forces which,

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\* Mobile Force Memorandum Concerning Tactical Organization of Mobile Force, September 10th, 1944, Department of Army Historical Division Japanese Microfilm HS-26, Item A.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121030, October 1944 (DesOpOrd 342) to Combined Fleet, War Diary 25th Air Flotilla, WDC Document 160137.



on October 10th, had commenced striking the Japanese island chain between the southern Philippines and Kyushu and in particular had struck Okinawa. This was obviously a serious deviation from the basic SHO plan which called for the initial withdrawal and dispersal of the principal air forces under such an attack. As a consequence of this deviation which, while authorized by the basic SHO plan, was, nevertheless, a minor provision thereof, the Japanese suffered very heavy losses in their land-based air power, as has been pointed out previously. In addition the base air forces were thoroughly disorganized, and their morale was low.

A second modification due to the will of the commander was occasioned when the commander directed that the qualified air strength of the carriers be removed from the carriers and diverted to land-based operations.\* This, to all intents and purposes, clearly eliminated the "attack from the flank" task which had been assigned the Main Force and limited that force to the diversion task only since there was little likelihood of these planes being returned to the carriers - they had been committed in the Battle off Formosa.

A third modification - this one brought on by the demands of the situation - which modification was not in the full sense a deviation from the basic SHO plan, occurred when the SECOND Striking Force was ordered (a) on October 14th, to sea to destroy Allied ships damaged in the Battle off Formosa,\*\* and (b) on October 16th, to proceed to Mako in the Pescadores if the Allied carrier task force, which had been observed on that day as consisting of thirteen carriers as a minimum, was still operating to the eastward of Formosa on the following day.\*\*\* This modification separated the SECOND Striking Force from the Main Force, but this was unimportant since the Main Force had now been committed to diversion action only.

Also, the FIRST Striking Force, which under the basic SHO plan had been assigned the task of destroying the Allied amphibious forces at the time of landing, was now given a new assignment, also brought on by the demands of the situation. This new assignment was to be prepared to proceed to the area east of Formosa and there to operate against the Allied carrier task force.\*\*\*\*

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\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 121110, October 1944 (DesOpOrd 344) to Combined Fleet, ZUIKAKU War Diary, WDC Document 161636.

\*\* CinC, Combined Fleet Dispatch 141216, October 1944, to Combined Fleet (DesOpOrd 348) War Diary DESRON 1, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\* CofS, Combined Fleet Dispatch 162007, October 1944 to Commander SECOND Striking Force, War Diary DESRON 1, WDC Document 161638.

\*\*\*\* Philippine Area Naval Operations, Part II, October-December 1944, Second Demobilization Bureau, Japanese Government, October 1947, Department of the Army Historical Division, File 8-5, JS-104.



The Japanese High Command then, at this time, 0719, October 17th, should Allied invasion operations occur, could only place in effect a modified SHO plan.

That this plan was unsound seems clear for numerous reasons.

(a) The ability of the Main Force in the Inland Sea and the FIRST Striking Force at Lingga-Singapore to concentrate at a definite time and place continued to be very doubtful indeed, and, if anything, owing to the reduction in the land-based air power and the carrier air power, had even become less possible.

(b) The ability of the land-based aircraft to maintain full scale attacks upon the Allied carrier force, and the invasion force, had seriously lessened. The Japanese had lost about 965 of their best aircraft, divided as follows: SIXTH Base Air Force 584 (including 100 planes of the EIGHTH Air Division), FIFTH Base Air Force 191, FOURTH Air Army 190. Moreover, many of their most experienced pilots had also been lost. They knew it was highly probable that, in view of the replacement program in effect within TF 38, the Allied carriers were in full strength in air power. They also knew that since their land-based air power had been so ineffective against TF 38, it stood little chance in its weakened and demoralized condition of being effective in the future until it had been reorganized and refitted. This would require considerable time.

(c) (1) The ability of the FIRST Striking Force to move from Lingga-Singapore to the objective area had been lessened since the ability of land-based air to provide it with proper air cover had been seriously reduced, if not made entirely ineffective. In fact, as has been pointed out previously, this ability had always been more of a concept than of a fact since Japanese communications at this time were such as to deny, in general, communications between land-based aircraft and ships. It was probably for this reason, in part, that Commander Mobile Force had recommended that the basic SHO plan be changed to permit Commander FIRST Striking Force to have his own planes for air cover, and for offensive operations against the Allied amphibious forces at the point of landing.

(2) The ability of the FIRST Striking Force to accomplish its assigned objectives even should it succeed in reaching the landing area was open to serious question. The Japanese well knew, at this time, that strong support forces composed of battleships, cruisers and destroyers, supported by carrier air power, were employed by the Allies in landing operations. As has been pointed out earlier Commander FIRST Striking Force had been directed to destroy in decisive battle those surface support forces which opposed him after which he was to destroy the transports. This was admittedly a difficult assignment. However, it became more difficult if the Main Force failed to divert the Allied carrier force away from the objective area, since the FIRST Striking



Force would then be opposed not only by the powerful Allied surface support forces but by the planes and ships of the carrier force as well. Its feasibility was open to serious question.

That this analysis of the weakness of the plan is correct is indicated by the following statement by CinC, Combined Fleet in 1950 concerning the feasibility of the plan: "Of this plan it can only be said that it was contrary to every principle of naval tactics. When we could not possess adequate control of the air, to send the main strength of our surface decisive battle force against the enemy landing point, was a flagrant departure from military common sense. However, under the existing circumstances there was no alternative unless, seeking safety in retreat, we were to supinely sit by and watch the enemy carry out his invasion."\*

(i) GENERAL SUMMARY

The preceding discussions of the background of the Battle for Leyte Gulf show, in a general way, that:

(a) The Allied effort in seizing the Philippines was designed to cut the Japanese lines of communication to the rich sources of strategic materials in the Southern Resources Area (Philippines, Netherlands East Indies, Burma, Malaya), and thereby fatally disrupt the Japanese war economy which was even, at this time, in serious shortage. This would both advance the progress of the war by many months and simplify arrangements for future operations.\*\* This Allied effort was spearheaded by a powerful amphibious force, strong in both naval and air power, which, as an initial move in the operations for the capture of the Philippines, was to seize beachheads on the east coast of Leyte. It was supported by (a) great air strikes by the fast carrier task force which had already hit heavily and most successfully against Japanese land-based air power in Nansei Shoto, Formosa and Luzon (b) by large numbers of submarines which were normally occupied in anti-shipping operations but which were also given offensive reconnaissance duties and (c) by limited numbers of land-based aircraft operating from the Marianas, Palau, Morotai and Chinese bases. In strategic command of all forces in the SOWESPAC area was COMSOWESPAC with his headquarters at Hollandia, but who, at this time, was in the cruiser NASHVILLE. In strategic command of the supporting forces of the POA was CINCPAC with his headquarters at Pearl Harbor.

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\* Admiral Soemu Toyoda, ex-IJN, The End of the Imperial Navy, (Tokyo, 1950), pages 149-154.

\*\* Joint Chiefs of Staff Dispatch 24, September 13th, 1944 to COMSOWESPAC.



(b) The Japanese effort was designed to prevent the extension of Allied power into the Philippine - Formosa - Nansei Shoto line because should that line be pierced the lifeline of Japanese economy to the Southern Resources Area would be broken. This was clearly stated, for the Fleet, by CinC, Combined Fleet when he said "Should we lose in the Philippines operations, even though the fleet should be left, the shipping lane to the south would be completely cut-off so that the fleet, if it should come back to Japanese waters, could not obtain its fuel supply. If it should remain in southern waters, it could not receive supplies of ammunition and arms."\* This was, of course, equally applicable to Formosa and the Nansei Shoto. The Japanese effort was spearheaded by the Combined Fleet, which, with its powerful naval power including its air power, both land and carrier-based, was to repel any attempt by the Allies to make an amphibious landing anywhere in the above mentioned Japanese lifeline. It was supported by army aircraft and by army ground troops. In strategic command of all naval forces including naval air forces, was CinC, Combined Fleet with his headquarters at Hiyoshi (Tokyo), but who at this time was at Takao, Formosa. In strategic command of all army ground and air forces in the Philippine area was CinC, Southern Army.

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\* The Campaigns of the Pacific War, USSBS 1946, Chapter XII, page 281.

CHAPTER IVEPILOGUE

At 0650, October 17th, the Naval Lookout Post on Suluan Island at the eastern approach to Leyte Gulf sighted a group of ships to seaward. At 0700 the Post Commander broadcasted an urgent plain language dispatch in substance as follows: "About ten battleships, cruisers and destroyers have appeared east of Suluan Island."\*

Some minutes later, when he noted some of the above ships entering Leyte Gulf, he sent out an additional dispatch as follows:

"One enemy battleship and six destroyers sighted on bearing 065°(T). Are penetrating into the strait. 0650."\*\*

This dispatch evidently referred to TU 78.4.4 composed of the light cruiser DENVER, the destroyer A.W. GRANT, the high speed minesweepers, HOWARD, PALMER, CHANDLER, and the high speed transports CROSBY and SANDS, which at this time were bearing about 165°(T) and were preparing to seize Suluan Island.

At 0805 Commander Southwest Area, at Manila, upon receipt of the above reports from his Lookout Post, ordered his forces to prepare for "Operation Philippines."\*\*\* Four minutes later, at 0809, CinC, Combined Fleet, then on Formosa, alerted the Combined Fleet to decisive battle in accordance with the previously promulgated SHO plans as follows:\*\*

"From: CinC, Combined Fleet.  
To: All Flags, Combined Fleet.  
Info: Surface Escort Force China Area Fleet.

Combined Fleet Special Dispatch Operation  
Order No. 14 SHO 1 Operation alert."

Thus the preliminary phase of the Leyte Gulf campaign came to a conclusion, and the climactic period of the operation, which will be the subject of subsequent volumes in this study, was ushered in.

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\* Material for Situation Estimates First Section Naval General Staff, October 1944, WDC Document 216764 (Microfilm); also Philippine Area Naval Operations, Second Demobilization Bureau Japanese Government, October 1947, Army Historical Division File No. 8-5, JS-104.

\*\* War Diary ZUIKAKU, October 1944, WDC Document 161636 NA 11793.

\*\*\* SW Area Force Dispatch 170805, October 1944 to All Fleet and Squadron Commanders SW Area Force, War Diary 61st Air Flotilla, October 1944, WDC Document 161643 NA 12260.



APPENDIX IORGANIZATION OF ALLIED FORCES AT0719 OCTOBER 17THBATTLE FOR LEYTE GULFALLIED NAVAL FORCES

	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C.
(a) TF 77 CENTRAL PHILIPPINES ATTACK FORCE.	Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C.
(a) (1) TG 77.1 Flagship Group*	Captain Granum, Alfred M.
(a) TU 77.1.1 Fleet Flagship Unit.	Captain Granum, Alfred M.
AGC WASATCH (FFFFF).	Captain Granum, Alfred M.
DD's AMMEN, MULLANY.	
(b) TU 77.1.2 Cruiser Unit**	Captain Coney, Charles E.
NASHVILLE.	Captain Coney, Charles E.
DD's ABNER READ, BUSH.	
(2) TG 77.2 Bombardment and Fire Support Group.	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
(a) TU 77.2.1 Fire Support Unit NORTH***	Rear Admiral Weyler, George L.
BATDIV 3 less NEW MEXICO, IDAHO.	Rear Admiral Weyler, George L.
MISSISSIPPI (FF).	Captain Redfield, Herman J.
BATDIV 4 less COLORADO.	Rear Admiral Ruddock, Theodore D.
WEST VIRGINIA (F),	Captain Wiley, Herbert V.
MARYLAND.	Captain Ray, Herbert J.
DD's AULICK (F), CONY, SIGOURNEY.	Commander Andrew, John D.
(b) TU 77.2.2 Fire Support Unit SOUTH****	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.
BATDIV 2	Rear Admiral Chandler, Theodore E.
TENNESSEE (F),	Captain Heffernan, John B.
CALIFORNIA,	Captain Burnett, Henry P.
PENNSYLVANIA.	Captain Martin, Charles F.
CRUDIV 4 plus MINNEAPOLIS less INDIANAPOLIS.	Rear Admiral Oldendorf, Jesse B.

\* War Diary MULLANY, October 15th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary NASHVILLE, October 16th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTU 77.2.1, Bombardment and Fire Support Mission on Leyte Island, Serial 0166, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary COMCRUDIV 4, October 12th, 1944 and COMCRUDIV 4 Operation Plan 2-44, Serial 0008, October 5th, 1944.

LOUISVILLE (FFF),	Captain Hurt, Samuel H.
PORTLAND,	Captain Settle, Thomas G.W.
MINNEAPOLIS.	Captain Slocum, Harry, B.
CRUDIV 9 less ST. LOUIS.	Rear Admiral Ainsworth, Walden L.
HONOLULU (F).	Captain Thurber, Harry R.
CRUDIV 12 less MONTPELIER,	
CLEVELAND.	Rear Admiral Hayler, Robert W.
DENVER (F),	Captain Bledsoe, Albert M.
COLUMBIA.	Captain Curts, Maurice E.
DESRON 56	Captain Smoot, Roland N.
DESDIV 111	Captain Smoot, Roland N.
LEUTZE, NEWCOMB (FF),	
BENNION, HEYWOOD L.	
EDWARDS, RICHARD P. LEARY.	
DESDIV 112 plus HALFORD.	Captain Conley, Thomas F., Jr.
ROBINSON (F), ROSS, ALBERT	
W. GRANT, BRYANT, HALFORD.	
DESDIV X-RAY less AULICK,	
CONY, SIGOURNEY.	Commander Hubbard, Miles H.
CLAXTON (F), THORN, WELLES,	
AVP SAN CARLOS.	Lt. Commander Mills, Delong
(3) TG 77.3 Close Covering Group*	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S.
(a) (1) TU 77.3.1 (Light Cruiser	
Group)	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S.
CRUDIV 15 less NASHVILLE	Rear Admiral Berkey, Russell S.
PHOENIX (FF)	Captain Duncan, Jack H.
BOISE	Captain Roberts, John S.
DESDIV 47 less BEALE	Captain McManes, Kenmore M.
HUTCHINS (F), BACHE, DALY, KILLEN.	
(2) TU 77.3.2 (Heavy Cruiser	
Group)	Commodore Collins, John A., RAN
HMAS SHROPSHIRE	Captain Nichols, Charles A.G., RN
HMAS AUSTRALIA (F)	Captain Dechaineux, Emile F.V., RAN
HMAS ARUNTA, HMAS WARRAMUNGA, BEALE.	
(4) TG 77.4 (Escort Carrier Group)	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L.
(a) (1) TU 77.4.1 (Panaon Carrier	
Group**)	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L.
(a) TU 77.4.11 CARDIV 22	Rear Admiral Sprague, Thomas L.
CVE SANGAMON (FFF)	Captain Browder, Maurice E.
(CVEG 37-22 VF, 9 VT)	Lt. Commander Hindman, Stanley E.
CVE SUWANNEE	Captain Johnson, William D.
(CVEG 60-21 VF, 9 VT)	Lt. Commander Feilbach, Harvey O., USNR
CVE CHENANGO	Captain Van Deurs, George
(CVEG 35-18 VF, 8 VT)	Lt. Commander Moore, Frederick T.
CVE SANTEE	Captain Blick, Robert E., Jr.
(CVEG 26-22 VF, 8 VT)	Lt. Commander Funk, Harold N.

\* CTG 77.3 Letter of Instructions Musketeer, Operations Serial 00113 October 11th. 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTU 77.4.1, Leyte Operation, from October 12th-October 29th, Serial 00104, November 8th, 1944.



- (b) TU 77.4.12 CARDIV 28 less  
 CVE's SARGENT BAY and  
 RUDYERD BAY. Rear Admiral Henderson, George H.  
 CVE SAGINAW BAY (FF) Captain Sutton, Frank C.  
 VC 78 -15 VF, 12 VT Lieutenant Lewis, F.G., USNR  
 CVE PETROF BAY Captain Kane, Joseph L.  
 VC 76 -18 VF, 12 VT Commander McCauley, James W.
- (c) TU 77.4.13 Screen. Captain Nunn, Ira H.  
 DESDIV 93 less  
 HEERMANN, HOEL. Captain Nunn, Ira H.  
 DD's McCORD (F),  
 TRATHEN, HAZELWOOD.  
 CORTDIV 63 less  
 SHELTON, DENNIS. Commander Bewick, James V.  
 DE's EDMONDS,  
 RICHARD S. BULL,  
 RICHARD M. ROWELL,  
 EVERSOLE, COOLBAUGH.
- (2) TU 77.4.14\* Rear Admiral Henderson, George H.  
 (Special Escort Group)  
 CVE's SAGINAW BAY (FF) (VC 78 - 15 VF, 12 VT),  
 PETROF BAY (VC 76 - 18 VF, 12 VT).  
 DE's EDMONDS, RICHARD S. BULL.
- (b) (1) TU 77.4.2 Southern  
 Carrier Group\*\* Rear Admiral Stump, Felix B.
- (a) TU 77.4.21 CARDIV 24 less  
 CVE's ANZIO and  
 CORREGIDOR. Rear Admiral Stump, Felix B.  
 CVE NATOMA BAY (FF) Captain Morehouse, Albert K.  
 VC 81 -18 VF, 12 VT Lt. Commander Barnes, Robert C.  
 CVE MANILA BAY Captain Lee, Fitzhugh  
 VC 80 -18 VF, 12 VT Lt. Commander Stubbs, H.K., USNR
- (b) TU 77.4.22 CARDIV 27 Rear Admiral Sample, William D.  
 CVE MARCUS ISLAND(FF) Captain Greber, Charles F.  
 VC 21 -18 VF, 12 VT Lt. Commander Murray, T.S., USNR  
 CVE KADASHAN BAY Captain Hunter, Robert N.  
 VC 20 -15 VF, 12 VT Lt. Commander Dale, John R., USNR  
 CVE SAVO ISLAND Captain Ekstrom, Clarence E.  
 VC 27 -15 VF, 12 VT Lt. Commander Jackson, Percival W.  
 CVE OMMANEY BAY Captain Young, Howard L.  
 VC 75 -17 VF, 12 VT Lt. Commander Smith, A.W., Jr., USNR

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\* Escorting TG 79.1 to Leyte Gulf.

\*\* Action Report CTU 77.4.2, Reoccupation of Leyte Island, October 18th-29th, 1944, Serial 00114, November 2nd, 1944.

- (c) TU 77.4.23 Screen. Captain Reynolds, Luther K.  
 DESDIV 94 less  
 JOHNSTON. Captain Reynolds, Luther K.  
 DD's HAGGARD (F),  
 FRANKS, HAILEY.  
 CORTDIV 69 less STAFFORD  
 plus LeRAY WILSON. Commander Phifer, Thomas C.  
 DE's RICHARD W. SUESENS,  
 ABERCROMBIE, LeRAY WILSON,  
 OBERRENDER, WALTER C. WANN.
- (2) TU 77.4.24 Captain Hunter, Robert N.  
 (Special Escort Group)\*  
 CVE's KADASHAN BAY (F), (VC 20 - 15 VF, 12 VT)  
 OMMANEY BAY (VC 75 - 17 VF, 12 VT).  
 DE's RICHARD W. SUESENS, ABERCROMBIE.
- (c) (1) TU 77.4.3 Northern Carrier  
 Group\*\* Rear Admiral Sprague, Clifton A.F.
- (a) TU 77.4.31 CARDIV 25 Rear Admiral Sprague, Clifton A.F.  
 CVE FANSHAW BAY (FF) Captain Johnson, Douglas P.  
 VC 68 - 17 VF, 11 TBM Lieutenant Johnson N.D., USNR  
 CVE ST. LO Captain McKenna, Francis J.  
 VC 65 - 15 VF, 11 VT Lt. Commander Jones, R.M., USNR  
 CVE WHITE PLAINS Captain Sullivan, Dennis J.  
 VC 4 - 12 VF, 12 VT Lieutenant Fickenscher, Edward R., Jr.  
 CVE KALININ BAY Captain Williamson, Thomas B.  
 VC 3 - 16 VF, 12 VT Lt. Commander Keighley, W.H., USNR
- (b) TU 77.4.32 CARDIV 26  
 less CVE's HOGGATT BAY  
 and NEHENTA BAY. Rear Admiral Ofstie, Ralph A.  
 CVE KITKUN BAY (F) Captain Handly, Albert  
 VC 5 - 18 VF, 11 VT Commander Fowler, Richard L.  
 CVE GAMBIER BAY Captain Vieweg, Walter V.R.  
 VC 10 - 18 VF, 11 VT Lt. Commander Huxtable, Edward J., Jr.
- (c) TU 77.4.33 Screen. Commander Thomas, William D.  
 DESDIV 93 less McCORD, TRATHEN,  
 HAZELWOOD, plus  
 JOHNSTON. Commander Thomas, William D.  
 DD's HOEL (F),  
 HEERMANN, JOHNSTON.

\* Action Report CTU 77.4.2, Reoccupation of Leyte Island, October 18th-29th, 1944, Serial 00114, November 2nd, 1944. Escorting TG 78.6.

\*\* Action Report CTU 77.4.32, Action off Samar Island, October 25th, 1944, Serial 00014, October 28th, 1944.



CORTDIV 64 less  
 O'FLAHERTY, CLARK,  
 SILVERSTEIN, LEWIS,  
 plus DENNIS and  
 SAMUEL B. ROBERTS. Lt. Commander Love, H.H.  
 DE's RAYMOND, DENNIS,  
 JOHN C. BUTLER (F),  
 SAMUEL B. ROBERTS.

(2) TU 77.4.34\*

CVE's KITKUN BAY (F), (VC 5 - 18 VF, 11 VT)  
 GAMBIER BAY (VC 10 - 18 VF, 11 VT)  
 DE's DENNIS, JOHN C. BUTLER (F).

(5) TG 77.5 Minesweeping and  
 Hydrographic Group\*\*

Commander Loud, Wayne R.

(a) TU 77.5.1 Minesweepers.

Commander Loud, Wayne R.

(1) Sweep Unit ONE.

Commander Loud, Wayne R.

Mine Division 5.

Lieutenant Brennan, John E. (USNR)

DMS's SOUTHARD (F),

CHANDLER, HOVEY (FF),

LONG.

Mine Division 19

(Modified).

Lt. Commander Clague, John (USNR)

DM's PREBLE, BREESE.

DMS's HAMILTON (F),

HOWARD, PALMER,

(APD SANDS with

4 LCPR sweepers) Lieutenant Samuels, Jerome M.

(USNR)

CHICKASAW (ATF). Lieutenant Olson, Louis C. (USNR)

(2) Sweep Unit TWO.

Lt. Commander Woodhouse, Ernest  
 W. (USNR)

Mine Division 14 plus AM SCOUT.

AM's ZEAL (F), VELOCITY, TUMULT,

TOKEN, SCOUT.

(3) Sweep Unit THREE

Lt. Commander Pierce, Herbert  
 R. Jr. (USNR)

Mine Division 14 plus AM SENTRY.

AM's REQUISITE (F), PURSUIT, REVENGE,

SAGE, SENTRY.

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\* Escorting TG's 78.1 and TG 78.2 to Leyte Gulf.

\*\* Action Report CTG 77.5, Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Straits and  
 Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.

(4) Sweep Unit FOUR. Lieutenant Stachli, Ralph J. Jr.  
YMS's 1, 81, 140 (F), 219\*, 319. (USNR)

(5) Sweep Unit FIVE. Lieutenant Latta, William A.  
YMS's 238, 243, 286, 293, 335, 398 (F). (USNR)

(6) Sweep Unit SIX. Lieutenant Schminke, Paul (USNR)  
YMS's 6, 39, 49, 52, 340 (F), 342.

(7) Sweep Unit SEVEN.\*\* Lieutenant Burns (USNR)  
YMS's 70, 71, 73, 314, 341 (F).

(8) Sweep Unit EIGHT. Lieutenant (jg) Daly (USNR)  
4 LCPR's (carried in APD SANDS).

(b) TU 77.5.2 Hydrographic Unit. Commander Hunt, Robert B.A. (RAN)

HMAS GASCOYNE, YMS's 316, 393, HMAL 1074.

(6) TG 77.6 Beach Demolition Group\*\*\*Lt. Commander Morgan, Charles C.  
(USNR)

(a) Transport Groups.

TRANSDIV 12 (Temporary). Lt. Commander Morgan, Charles C.  
(USNR)

APD's TALBOT (F), MANLEY,\*\*\*\*  
GOLDSBOROUGH, KANE,\*\*\*\*

TRANSDIV 14 (Temporary). Lt. Commander Murphy, Owen B.  
(USNR)

APD's BROOKS, BELNAP,\*\*\*\* OVERTON,\*\*\*\*  
HUMPHREYS (F).

TRANSDIV 16 (Temporary), less SANDS.  
Lt. Commander Welch, Richard L.  
(USNR)

APD's RATHBURNE, GEO E. BADGER, CLEMSON.

(b) Reconnaissance and Demolition

Group\*\*\*\*\* Lt. Commander Eaton, James B. Jr.  
(USNR)

(1) UDT Unit NORTH. Lt. Commander Eaton, James B. Jr.  
(USNR)

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\* Broke down and returned to Manus October 10th. Action Report CTG 77.5 Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Straits and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 28th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 77.5 Minesweeping Operations in Surigao Straits and Leyte Gulf, Serial 0111, October 29th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary TALBOT, October 12th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Carried demolitions only. War Diary TALBOT, October 12th, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* CTG 77.2 Operation Plan 2-44, Appendix 3 to Annex B. War Diary TALBOT, October 12th, 1944.



UDT No. 6 (Embarked  
in APD CLEMSON). Lieutenant Logsdon, D.M. (USNR)

UDT No. 9 (Embarked  
in APD BROOKS). Lt. Commander Eaton, James B.  
Jr. (USNR)

UDT No. 10 (Embarked  
in RATHBURNE). Lieutenant Choate, Arthur O.  
Jr. (USNR)

(2) UDT Unit SOUTH. Lt. Commander Young, Donald E.  
(USNR)

UDT No. 3 (Embarked  
in APD TALBOT). Lieutenant Crist, Thomas C. (USNR)

UDT No. 4 (Embarked  
in APD GOLDSBOROUGH). Lieutenant Carberry, William G.  
(USNR)

UDT No. 5 (Embarked  
in APD HUMPHREYS). Lieutenant Debolt, John K.  
(USNR)

UDT No. 8 (Embarked  
in APD GEO. E. BADGER) Lt. Commander Young, Donald E.  
(USNR)

(7) TG 77.7 Service Group\* Rear Admiral Glover, Robert O.

(a) TU 77.7.1 Fueling Group\*\* Captain Beard, Jefferson D.  
AO's ASHTABULA (F), SALAMONIE,  
SARANAC, CHEPACHET, AE MAZAMA,  
S.S. DURHAM VICTORY,\*\*\*  
CORTDIV 40 less FOREMAN, ENGLAND,  
plus MANNING. Commander Thorwall, C.A. (USNR)  
DE's BOWERS, WHITEHURST, WILLMARTH,  
WITTER, MANNING.

(b) TU 77.7.2 Task Unit Leyte\*\*\*\*Captain Hylant, Emory P.  
IX (AO's) ARETHUSA, CARIBOU,  
MINK, PANDA, AN's TEAK,  
SILVERBELL, SATINLEAF,  
AKN INDUS (F), ARL ACHILLES,  
ARS CABLE, AO(W) SEVERN,  
AE MURZIM.

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\* CTG 77.7 Operation Plan 2-44, Serial 00021, October 8th, 1944.

\*\* War Diary SARANAC, October 1944.

\*\*\* Employed as an ammunition ship.

\*\*\*\* War Diary INDUS, October 1944.

- (b) TF 78 Northern Attack Force. Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E.
- (1) TG 78.1 Palo Attack Group. Rear Admiral Barbey, Daniel E.
- (a) TU 78.1.1 Group Flagship\* Commander McDowell, Lewis R.  
 (Also Force Flagship Unit).  
 AGC BLUE RIDGE (FFF). Commander McDowell, Lewis R.
- TU 78.1.2 Relief Group  
 Flagship. Commander Wicks, John E. Jr.  
 DD RUSSELL. Commander Wicks, John E. Jr.
- (b) TU 78.1.3 Transport Unit\*\* Captain Brittain, Thomas B.  
 TRANSDIV 6 (Temporary). Captain Baker, Harold D.  
 APA's FAYETTE (F), ORMSBY,  
 LEEDSTOWN,  
 AKA TITANIA,  
 AK HERCULES,  
 LSD EPPING FOREST,  
 LSD CARTER HALL.  
 TRANSDIV 24 (Temporary). Captain Brittain, Thomas B.  
 APA's DuPAGE (FF), FULLER,  
 ELMORE, WAYNE,  
 AP JOHN LAND,  
 AKA AQUARIUS,  
 LSD GUNSTON HALL.
- (c) TU 78.1.4 LST Unit.\*\*\* Commander Baker, Danford M.  
 26, 168, 171, 181, 452 (F),  
 456, 458, 459, 462, 463,  
 465, 466.
- (d) TU 78.1.5 LSM Unit\*\*\*\* Lieutenant McComb, Edward L. (USNR)  
 19 (F), 21, 257.
- (e) TU 78.1.6 Escort and Fire  
 Support Unit\*\*\*\*\* Captain Crommelin, Henry  
 DESDIV 49 less STEVENS. Captain Crommelin, Henry  
 DD's JOHN RODGERS (F),  
 MURRAY, HARRISON,  
 McKEE.

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\* CTF 78 Operation Plan 101-44, Serial 0008, October 3rd, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.3, Leyte Assault, Serial 0200 October 24th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.4, Leyte Operation, File FE25/A16-3, November 1st, 1944.

\*\*\*\* War Diary LSM-21, October 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.6 Serial 0114, November 5th, 1944.



- (f) TU 78.1.7 Control Unit\* Captain Brantly, Neill D.  
 PC's 598, 623 (F),  
 1129, SC 726.
- (g) TU 78.1.8 LCI Support Unit\*\* Lieutenant Sargent, Robert E. Jr.  
 (USNR)  
 LCI(G)s 65, 23, LCI(R)s  
 71 (F), 72, 73, 74, 331.
- (h) TU 78.1.9 Demolition  
 Unit\*\*\* Lieutenant (jg) Sibigtroth, J.C.  
 (USNR)  
 LCI(D)s 227, 228.
- (i) TU 78.1.10 LCI Smoke  
 Unit\*\*\*\* Captain McGee, Homer F.  
 LCI's 28 (F), 361, 363,  
 364, 429, 447,  
 448.
- (j) TU 78.1.11 Salvage  
 Unit\*\*\*\*\* Lt. Commander Castle, Northrup  
 H. (USNR)  
 AT QUAPAW.
- (k) TU 78.1.12 Army Head-  
 quarters Unit\*\*\*\*\* Lieutenant Gunby, D. Kirk (USNR)  
 PCE(R)s 848 (F), 849, 850  
 S.S. APACHE, FP 47.
- (l) TU 78.1.13 Beach  
 Parties\*\*\*\*\* Lieutenant Zinser, Eugene J. (USNR)  
 Beach Party No. 1. Lieutenant Walter, Raymond G. (USNR)  
 Beach Party No. 4. Lieutenant Zinser, Eugene J. (USNR)

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- \* Action Report CTU 78.1.7 Serial (none), November 1st, 1944.  
 \*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.8 Serial 160, November 22nd, 1944.  
 \*\*\* CTG 78.1 Operation Plan 1-44, Serial FF-0001, October 7th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 78.1.10, Leyte Operation, Serial 0122, November 20th,  
 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary QUAPAW, October 16th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* War Diary PCE(R) 848, October 13th, 1944.  
 \*\*\*\*\* CTG 78.1 Operation Plan 1-44, Serial FF-0001, October 7th, 1944.

- (2) TG 78.2 San Ricardo Attack Group\* Rear Admiral Fechteler, William M.
- (a) Group Flagship. Captain Conlan, Clarence V.  
APA FREMONT (FFF).
- (b) Relief Group Flagship. Lt. Commander Benson, Ralph H. Jr.  
DD ANDERSON.
- (c) Headquarters Support Aircraft. Commander Spangler, John G.
- (d) TU 78.2.1 Transport Unit Captain Carlson, Milton O.
- (1) TU 78.2.2 TRANSDIV 20. Captain Loomis, Donald W.  
APA's LEONARD WOOD (FF), PIERCE, JAMES O'HARA, AP LaSALLE, AKA ELECTRA, LSD OAK HILL.
- (2) TU 78.2.3 TRANSDIV 32. Captain Carlson, Milton O.  
APA's HARRIS (F), FREMONT (FFF), BARNSTABLE, AP HERALD OF THE MORNING, AKA ARNEB, LSD WHITE MARSH.
- (e) TU 78.2.4 Tractor Unit. Captain Scruggs, Richard M.  
LST's 18, 66, 67, 68, 202, 204, 245, 466 (F), 467, 468, 469, 470, 474, 476.
- (f) TU 78.2.5 LSM Unit. Commander Weintraub, Daniel J.  
18 (F), 20, 22, 23, 34, 138, 139, 258, 311.
- (g) TU 78.2.6 Screening Unit. Captain Jarrell, Albert E.  
DESDIV 42 less RADFORD plus ANDERSON. Commander Martin, L.H.  
DD's FLETCHER (F), LaVALLETTE, JENKINS, ANDERSON.



- (h) TU 78.2.7 Control Unit. Captain Loomis, Donald W.  
 PC's 1134 (F), 1119,  
 1120, SC 991.
- (i) TU 78.2.8 Support Unit\* Commander Day, Dwight H.  
 LCI(R)s 34, 230 (F), 337,  
 338, 340, 341,  
 LCI(G)s 64, 69 (F).
- (j) TU 78.2.9 Salvage Unit. Lieutenant Wurzler, Walter R.  
 (USNR)  
 ATO SONOMA.
- (k) TU 78.2.10 Beach Parties. Lt. Commander Halloran, Edward  
 R. (USNR)  
 Beach Party No. 3. Lt. Commander Halloran, Edward  
 R. (USNR)  
 Beach Party No. 8. Lieutenant Nordyke, Ted (USNR)
- (3) TG 78.3 Panaon Attack Group\*\* Rear Admiral Struble, Arthur D.
- (a) TU 78.3.1 Group Flagship. Commander Rittenhouse, Ellis B.  
 DD HUGHES (FF).
- (b) TU 78.3.2 Transport Unit. Commander Cousin, Alan P.  
 (RANR) (S)  
 LSI's MANOCORA, KANIMBLA,  
 WESTRALIA.
- (c) TU 78.3.3 Fast Transport Unit Captain The Lord Ashbourne (RN)  
 CM ARIADNE.
- (d) TU 78.3.4 Escort Unit. Captain Melgaard, John L.  
 DESDIV 4 less STERETT and  
 WILSON. Commander McGarry, W.T.  
 DD's LANG (F), STACK: Captain Parrish, H.O.  
 DESDIV 50.  
 DD's SIGSBEE, RINGGOLD (F),  
 SCHROEDER, DASHIELL.
- (e) TU 78.3.5 Control and Support Craft. Captain Murphey, Charles D.  
 PC's 1122, 1133, LCI(G)s  
 68, 70 (F), LCI(R)s 31 (F),  
 342, LCI(D) 29.

\* Action Report CTG 78.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0085, November 29th, 1944.  
 \*\* Action Report CTG 78.3, Panaon Group, Serial 0019, undated.

- (f) TU 78.3.6 Beach Party No. 7. Lieutenant O'Neill (USNR)
- (4) TG 78.4 Dinagat Attack Group\* Rear Admiral Struble, Arthur D.
- (a) TU 78.4.1 Black Beach ONE Unit. Rear Admiral Struble, Arthur D.  
 DD's HUGHES (FF), STACK,  
 ROBINSON, PF GALLUP,  
 CM HMAS ARIADNE,  
 APD's WARD (F), KILTY,  
 SCHLEY.
- (b) TU 78.4.2 Black Beach TWO Unit. Captain Benson, Francis W.  
 DD's LANG (F), ROSS,  
 PF BISBEE (F),  
 APD HERBERT.
- (c) TU 78.4.3 also TU 77.2.3, Close Covering Group\*\* Rear Admiral Hayler, Robert W.  
 CL's DENVER, COLUMBIA.  
 DESDIV 112. Captain Conley, Thomas F., Jr.  
 DD's BRYANT, ROBINSON,  
 ROSS, ALBERT W. GRANT.
- (d) TU 78.4.4 Black Beach THREE Unit. Rear Admiral Hayler, Robert W.  
 DENVER (F), DD ALBERT W.  
 GRANT, APD's CROSBY.
- (5) TG 78.5 Harbor Entrance Control Group\*\*\* Captain Benson, Francis W.  
 PF's BISBEE (F), GALLUP,  
 LCI's 343, 344, 430 (F), 432.
- (6) TG 78.6 Reinforcement Group ONE\*\*\*\* Captain Jenkins, Samuel P.
- (a) RED Beach Unit ONE. Captain Jenkins, Samuel P.  
 TRANSDIV 8 (Temporary). Captain Jenkins, Samuel P.  
 APA's CRESCENT CITY (FF),  
 WARREN, WINDSOR.

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\* Action Report CTG 78.4, Dinagat Group, Serial 0018, undated.

\*\* Action Report CTU 78.4.3 and 78.4.4, Bombardment and Support of Landings, Suluan Island, Serial 0149, November 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.5, October 18-24th, November 22nd, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 78.6, Serial 0154, October 31st, 1944.



- LST Unit. Commander Linthicum, Theodoric C.  
623, 666, 667, 668, 695,  
697, 740, 741, 744, 751,  
986, 1017, 1018 (F), 1027.
- (b) BLUE-ORANGE Beach Unit. Lieutenant Talley, William O.  
LST's 24, 471, 472 (F),  
606.
- (c) WHITE Beach Unit. Captain Hanson, Ralph E.  
TRANSDIV 26 (Temporary). Captain Hanson, Ralph E.  
APA's CALLAWAY (FF),  
LEON, SUMTER,  
AP STORM KING,  
AK JUPITER.
- (d) LST Unit. Captain Swigart, Oral R.  
170, 397, 460, 549, 613,  
614 (F), 696, 699, 700,  
910, 911, 912, 993, 1014,  
ARL ACHILLES, XAK's THOMAS,  
FIELDS, SHORT, GIANELLA,  
KINNEY, JUDSON.
- (e) LCI Unit 44 (Temporary). Commander Tucker, James F.  
683, 684, 685, 693, 977,  
978 (F), 979, 980, 981,  
982, 1064, 1065.
- (f) Escort Unit. Captain Solomons, Edward A.  
DD's MORRIS (F), HOWORTH,  
MUSTIN, STEVENS,  
PF's CARSON CITY,  
BURLINGTON.
- (7) TG 78.7 Reinforcement Group TWO\* Captain Ginder, John K.B.  
Convoy Unit.
- (a) Liberty Ships.  
GENERAL FLEISCHER, CAPE ROMANO, CAPE CONSTANCE, JOHN PAGE,  
SABIK, JANSSENS, LEO MERRITT, DAVID GALLIARD, FRANK CUHEL,  
MARCUS DALY, BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE, JOHN FOSTER, VITUS BERING,  
SAMUEL BARLOW, BENJAMIN WHEELER, LOUIS WUBLE, CHARLOTTE  
CUSHMAN, OVID BUTLER, ESCANABA VICTORY, CASSIOPIA,  
CLARENCE DARROW, ESCALANTE, JAMES KING, EDWARD S. HOUGH.

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\* Action Report CTG 78.7, Serial 0176, November 10th, 1944.

(b) SERVICE FORCE:

TU 77.7.2 less AE MURZIM  
AN SATINLEAF, ARL ACHILLES Captain Hylant, Emory P.  
IX (AO's) ARETHUSA, CARIBOU,  
MINK, PANDA, AN's TEAK,  
SILVERBELL, AKN INDUS,  
ARS CABLE, AO(W) SEVERN.

(c) LST Unit.

Captain Seay, Erskine A.

464, 552, 553, 554, 555,  
556, 557, 558, 559, 569,  
573, 610 (FF), 619, 658,  
663, 673, 687, 688, 694,  
703, 734, 736, 737, 746,  
749, 750, 908, 919, 990,  
991, 1015, 1025, 1026,  
AO SUAMICO, PG TULSA.

(d) SCREEN:

Captain Ginder, John K.B.

DESDIV 41 less HOWORTH. Captain Ginder, John K.B.  
DD's NICHOLAS (F), O'BANNON,  
TAYLOR, HOPEWELL, PF's SAN PEDRO,\*  
MUSKOGEE.

(8) TG 78.8 Reinforcement Group THREE\*\* Commander Steinmetz, J.L.,  
(USCG)

CONVOY UNIT:

(a) Service Ship Unit.

AK's MURZIM,\*\*\* HYPERION, ZAURAK,  
APC 17, AN SATINLEAF.\*\*\*

(b) Liberty Ship Unit.

FLYOD B. OLSON, THOMAS NELSON, PRINCE L. CAMPBELL,  
JOE C.S. BLACKBURN, AMERIGO VESPUCCI, MATTHEW P. DEADY,  
VAN NUYS, CAPE JUDY, CAPE CUMBERLAND, SEAMAN A. NAPP,  
MORRISON R. WAITE, JOHN ALDEN, ATWATER, A. BAILEY,  
JOHN BARTROM, JUAN CABRILLO, CARL G. BARTH.

(c) LST Unit.

22, 206 (FF), 220, 454, 618, 922.

(d) Screen

PF EUGENE, EL PASO, VAN BUREN, ORANGE.

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\* Action Report CTG 78.7, Central Philippines Operation, Serial 0176,  
November 10th, 1944.

\*\* War Diaries, HYPERION, ZAURAK, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\* Attached to TU 77.7.2.



(c) TF 79 Southern Attack Force.*	Vice Admiral Wilkinson, Theodore S.
Force Flagship.	
AGC MOUNT OLYMPUS (FFFF).	Captain Shultz, John H.
Commander Support Aircraft.	Captain Taylor, Herbert W., Jr.
(1) TG 79.1 Attack Group ABLE.	Rear Admiral Conolly, Richard L.
Group Flagship.	
AGC APPALACHIAN (FFF).	Captain Jeffs, Charles R.
(a) TG 79.3 Transport Group ABLE**	Captain Richardson, Clifford G.
(1) TU 79.3.1 TRANSDIV 7.	Captain Richardson, Clifford G.
APA CAVALIER (FF),	
J. FRANKLIN BELL,	
FELAND, AKA THUBAN,	
AP GOLDEN CITY, LSD LINDENWALD.	
(2) TU 79.3.2 TRANSDIV 30***	Captain Misson, Clinton A.
APA KNOX (F), CALVERT,	
CUSTER, AKA CHARA,	
APH RIXEY.	
(3) TU 79.3.3 TRANSDIV 38	
(Temporary).****	Captain Allen, Charles.
APA LAMAR (F), ALPINE,	
HEYWOOD, AKA ALSHAIN,	
AP STARLIGHT, LSD ASHLAND.	
(4) TU 79.3.4 TRANSDIV	
X-RAY.**	Captain Snackenberg, John A.
APA's GEORGE CLYMER,	
PRESIDENT HAYES,	
AGC MOUNT OLYMPUS,	
AK MERCURY,***** LSV MONITOR.*****	

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\* Action Report CTG 79.1, Leyte Operation, Serial 00454, October 26th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 79.3, Serial 0169, November 8th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.3.2, Serial 086, October 26th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.3.3, Serial 0118, October 31st, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* For administrative purposes the MERCURY and the MONITOR were under CTU 79.3.3, and the PRESIDENT HAYES and possibly the GEORGE CLYMER under CTU 79.3.1.

- (5) TU 79.3.5 Underwater Demolition Unit.\* Lt. Commander Morgan, Charles C. (USNR)
- UDT No. 3  
(in APD TALBOT). Lieutenant Crist, Thomas C. (USNR)
- UDT No. 4  
(in APD GOLDSBOROUGH) Lieutenant Carberry, William G. (USNR)
- (6) TU 79.3.6 LCT Unit.\* Lieutenant Wassell, Meyer (USNR)  
687, 738, 739, 740, 772,  
781, 819, 820, 861, 863,  
864, 990.
- (7) TU 79.11.1 Transport Group ABLE Screen.\*\* Captain Marshall, William J.  
DESRON 48 Captain Marshall, William J.  
DESDIV 95 less  
STEMBEL. Captain Marshall, William J.  
ERBEN (F), WALKER,  
HALE, ABBOTT.  
DESDIV 96 less BULLARD  
plus GANSEVOORT and  
BRAINE. Commander Kobey, Theodore H.  
KIDD, GANSEVOORT,  
BLACK (F), CHAUNCEY,  
BRAINE.
- (b) Tractor Group ABLE. Captain Webb, Richard C., Jr.
- (1) TG 79.5 LST Unit. Captain Webb, Richard C., Jr.
- (a) TU 79.5.1 Commander Shively, Joshua C.  
608, 609, 611, 612 (FF),  
693, 738, 739 (F), 909.
- (b) TU 79.5.2. Commander Parsons, Edwin C. (USNR)  
126, 169, 205, 223, 242, 565 (F),  
605, 670, 686, 733.

\* Action Report CTG 79.3, Amphibious Invasion, Leyte, P.I., October 20th-23rd 1944, Serial 0169, November 8th, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTU 79.11.1, October 20th-24th, 1944, Serial 080, October 31st, 1944.



(c) TU 79.5.3\* Lt. Commander Harlan, James L.  
 34, 123, 125, 207,  
 213, 219, 451 (F),  
 461, 478, 482, 488, 617, 1006.

(2) TG 79.7 Control Unit.\*\* Commander Busok, Vilhelm K.  
 DD STEMBEL (F), PC's  
 462, 464, 470, 563;  
 PCS's 1391, 1418, 1429;  
 SC's 631, 632, 1004;  
 6 LCC's.

(3) TG 79.7.1 Gunboat Support  
 Unit. Commander Montgomery, Alan R.

(a) TU 79.7.2 Rocket  
 Unit.\*\*\* Commander Montgomery, Alan R.  
 LCI(G)s 365, 366, 407,  
 422, 439, 440, 442, 475,  
 558 (F), 559, 560, 561,  
 565 (FF), 567, 568, 580,  
 751, 752.

(b) TU 79.7.3 Mortar  
 Unit.\*\*\*\* Lt. Commander Robinson, Carl F.  
 (USNR)  
 LCI(M)s 1056(F),  
 1057, 1058, 1059;  
 LCI(A)s 975, 1055.

(c) TU 79.7.4 Salvage and  
 Fire Fighting Unit. Lt. Commander Starkus, Charles  
 J.  
 LCI(L)564 (F), 676\*\*

(2) TG 79.2 Attack Group BAKER\*\*\*\*\* Rear Admiral Royal, Forrest B.

Group Flagship.  
 AGC ROCKY MOUNT (FFF). Captain Patten, Stanley F.

(a) TG 79.4 Transport Group  
 BAKER. Captain Knowles, Herbert B.

\* Action Report CTU 79.5.3, Report of Operations in the Amphibious Assault on Leyte Island, P.I., October 20th-24th, Serial 284, January 1st, 1945.

\*\* Action Report CTG 79.3, Amphibious Invasion, Leyte, P.I., October 20th-23rd, 1944, Serial 0169, November 8th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report LCI(G) 565, Assault on Leyte, October 25th, 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.7.3, Serial 051, October 23rd, 1944.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

- (1) TU 79.4.1 TRANSDIV 10  
 (Temporary)\* Captain Morrison, George D.  
 APA's CLAY (F),  
 ARTHUR MIDDLETON, BAXTER,  
 WM. P. BIDDLE, AP GEORGE F. ELLIOTT,  
 AKA CAPRICORNUS, LSV CATSKILL.
- (2) TU 79.4.2 TRANSDIV 18\*\* Captain Knowles, Herbert E.  
 APA's CAMBRIA (FF),  
 MONROVIA, FREDERICK FUNSTON,  
 AP WAR HAWK, AKA ALCYONE,  
 LSD CASA GRANDE, LSD RUSHMORE.
- (3) TU 79.4.3 TRANSDIV 28\*\*\* Captain Flanagan, Henry C.  
 APA's BOLIVAR (F), SHERIDAN,  
 DOYEN, AP COMET, AKA ALMAACK,  
 AK AURIGA, LSD BELLE GROVE.
- (4) MINDIV 34 less SCOUT, SCUFFLE,  
 SENTRY\*\*\*\* Lt. Commander James R. Keefer  
 SAUNTER (F), SALUTE, SCRIMMAGE
- (5) TU 79.11.2 Transport  
 Group BAKER Screen.\*\*\*\*\* Captain McLean, Ephraim R., Jr.  
 DESRON 49 (Temporary). Captain McLean, Ephraim R., Jr.  
 DESDIV 97 less  
 WILLIAM D. PORTER  
 and YOUNG. Captain McLean, Ephraim R., Jr.  
 PICKING (F), SPROSTON, WICKES.  
 DESDIV 98 less  
 KIMBERLY, LUCE. Captain Cooper, William G.  
 ISHERWOOD (F), CHARLES J. BADGER.  
 DESDIV 101 less HALL,  
 PAUL HAMILTON plus  
 MacDONOUGH. Captain Martin, Hugh J.  
 HALLIGAN (F), HARADIN,  
 TWIGGS, MacDONOUGH.
- (b) TG 79.6 (LST-LCI Transport  
 Group BAKER), BAKER.\*\* Captain Rimer, Theodore W.

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\* War Diary CTG 79.4 (COMTRANSDIV 10), October 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

\*\*\* War Diary COMET, October 1944.

\*\*\*\* Assigned to TG 79.4 for movement to Leyte--to report to CTG 77.5 on arrival in accordance with CTG 79.2 Mailgram 120932 October 1944 to CTG 79.4, COMINDIV 34, SALUTE, SAUNTER and SCRIMMAGE.

\*\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.11.2, Assault on Leyte Island, Serial 0121, October 30th, 1944.



- (1) TU 79.6.1 LST-LSM Transport  
 Unit. Commander Ageton, Arthur A.
- Unit Flagship.  
 DD LUCE (FF). Commander Owens, Hinton A.
- (a) TU 79.6.11  
 Assault Unit  
 BLUE.\* Lt. Commander Reith, George  
 (USNR)  
 LST's 20, 483, 486, 568,  
 671, 745, 918, 999, 1013, 1024.
- (b) TU 79.6.12 Assault  
 Unit ORANGE\*\* Lt. Commander Drexler, Louis A.,  
 Jr.  
 LST's 117, 118, 277, 564,  
 567, 669, 672, 698, 916, 917 (F).
- (c) TU 79.6.13 Reserve  
 Unit ONE\*\* Lieutenant Barber, Oliver W.  
 LST's 269, 270 (F),  
 615, 704, LSM's 134, 135.
- (d) TU 79.6.14 Reserve Unit  
 TWO\*\*\* Lt. Commander Blanche, John  
 G., Jr.  
 LSM 24 (F), 29, 136, 233.
- (e) TU 79.6.15 LCT  
 Unit\*\* Lieutenant Franklin, Gordon P.  
 (USNR)  
 688, 747, 821, 822, 830, 898,  
 992, 1016, 1296, 1298.
- (2) TU 79.6.2 LCI Unit. Captain Rimer, Theodore W.
- (a) TU 79.6.21 Mortar  
 Unit\*\*\*\* Lt. Commander Hannett, George W.  
 (USNR)  
 LCI(M)s 658, 659, 660,(F),  
 754; LCI(A)s 775, 974.

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\* Action Report CTU 79.6.11, October 20th-24th, 1944, Serial 038-44,  
 October 31st, 1944.

\*\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.6.14, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 05, October 30th,  
 1944.

\*\*\*\* Action Report CTU 79.6.21, Seizure of Leyte, Serial 114, November 4th,  
 1944.

(b) TU 79.6.22 Rocket  
 Gunboat Unit.\* Lieutenant Giliberty, Frank R.  
 (USNR)  
 LCI(G)s 366, 372, 373,  
 439, 440, 451, 461, 462,  
 464, 465, 467, 472, 475.

(c) TU 79.6.23 LCI Salvage  
 Unit.\* Captain Rimer, Theodore W.  
 LCI(L)s (S&FF)  
 738 (F), 598.

(3) TU 79.11.3 Landing Craft  
 Screen.\*\* Captain Coward, Jesse G.  
 DESRON 54. Captain Coward, Jesse G.  
 DESDIV 107 less  
 WADLEIGH and  
 NORMAN SCOTT. Captain Coward, Jesse G.  
 REMEY, MERTZ,  
 MONSSEN.  
 DESDIV 108. Commander Phillips, Richard H.  
 McDERMUT (F),  
 McGOWAN, McNAIR, MELVIN.  
 PCE(R)s 851, 852, 853.

(c) TG 79.19 Salvage Group\*\* Commander Foss, Henry O. (USNR)  
 less GRAPPLE.  
 ARS PRESERVER, ARL EGERIA,  
 ATF's POTAWATOMI, CHOWANOC,  
 CHICKASAW, MENOMINEE.\*\*\*

(b) COMMANDER ALLIED NAVAL FORCES SOWESPAC Vice Admiral Kinkaid, Thomas C.

(a) TG 70.1 (Motor Torpedo Boats) Commander Bowling, Selman S.

(1) TU 70.1.3 (Leyte Group) Lt. Commander Leeson, Robert  
 (USNR)

(a) MTB RON 7 Lt. Commander Leeson, Robert  
 (USNR)

127, 128, 129, 130, 131,  
 132, 134, 137, 138.

(b) MTB RON 12 Lieutenant Pullen, Weston C., Jr.  
 (USNR)

146, 150, 151, 152, 190,  
 191, 192, 194, 195, 196.

\* Action Report CTG 79.2, Leyte Operation, Serial 0032, November 4th, 1944.

\*\* CTG 79 Attack Plan A304-44, October 2nd, 1944.

\*\*\* PRESERVER with YMS 176, 311, 389 proceeding to Leyte as TU 79.12.1; CHOWANOC with TU 79.11.1; POTAWATOMI, MENOMINEE with TG 79.6; CHICKASAW with TG 77.5; EGERIA proceeding join TG 79.1.1.



- (c) MTB RON 21  
320, 321, 323, 324, 325,  
326, 327, 328, 329, 330,  
331. Lieutenant Gleason, Carl T. (USNR)
- (d) MTB RON 33  
488, 489, 490, 491, 492,  
493, 494, 495, 496, 497. Lieutenant Preston, Arthur M.  
(USNR)
- (e) MTB RON 36  
522, 523, 524, 525, 526 Lt. Commander Tappaan, Francis  
U.S. Army QS 13 D. (USNR)  
One Crash Boat
- (2) TU 70.1.6 (Advance Tender  
Unit). Lt. Commander Holroyd, Walter W.  
WACHAPREAGUE (AGP 8) (USNR)  
WILLOUGHBY (AGP 9)  
HALF MOON (AVP 26)\*  
OYSTER BAY (AGP 6)
- (b) TF 71 Submarines, West Australia. Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W.
- (1) TG 71.1 U.S. Patrol Group. Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W.
  - (a) On Patrol.  
ANGLER, BLUEGILL, COD,  
DARTER, LAPON, BERGALL,  
BONEFISH, DACE, HAMMERHEAD,  
PADDLE, ROCK.
  - (b) En route Patrol.  
BATFISH, BREAM, GUITARRO,  
GURNARD, RATON.
  - (c) En route Base.  
BAYA, CAVALLA, HAWKBILL, RAY,  
BECUNA, FLASHER, HOE.
- (2) TG 71.7 British and Netherlands  
Patrol Group. Rear Admiral Christie, Ralph W.
  - (a) On Patrol.  
ZWAARDVISH, STOIC, STURDY,  
SIRDAR.
  - (b) En route Patrol.  
STORM, TANTIVY, TANTALUS.

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\* For movement to objective area only.

(c) En route Base.  
 SEA ROVER, SPITEFUL, TELEMACHUS.

(c) TF 72 Submarines, East Australia. Captain Haines, John M.

(1) TG 72.1 Special Mission Group. Captain Haines, John M.

NAUTILUS, NARWHAL, CERO.

(d) TF 73 Naval Air Forces. Rear Admiral Wagner, Frank D.

(1) TG 73.1 Flag Group. Captain Evans, William A.

CURRITUCK (FF)  
 1 AVR.

(2) TG 73.2 Strike and Rescue Group\* Captain Oliver, Richard M.

(a) TU 73.2.1 (Rescue) Commander Fleming, Morton K., Jr.

ORCA  
 VPB-11 (8 PBY)  
 1 AVR

(b) TU 73.2.2 (Strike) Captain Oliver, Richard K.  
 TANGIER  
 VPB-29 (8 PBY)  
 2 AVR's

(3) TG 73.3 Mamus Group\*\* Captain Lambrecht, John O.  
 HEDRON 10  
 Patrol Planes Present Mamus  
 Carrier Replacement Pool  
 Patrol Plane Replacement Squadrons.

(4) TG 73.4 Search and Support Group. Captain Jones, Carrol B.

Patrol Planes Present Woendi.

(a) TU 73.4.1\*\*\* Lieutenant Norcott, John M.  
 (USNR)

HERON  
 VPB-52 Detachment (4 PBY).

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\* Based at Morotal. (Table 5, Naval Air Forces SEVENTH Fleet).  
 \*\* 15 VSB (VS 61) employed for offshore patrol not included.  
 \*\*\* Based at Hollandia.





(c) ALLIED AIR FORCES, SOWESPAC\*

Lt. General Kenney, George C.,  
(AC) USA

(a) Far East Air Forces.

Lt. General Kenney, George C.,  
(AC) USA

(1) FIFTH Air Force (Assault Force). Lt. General Whitehead, Ennis C.,  
(AC) USA

(a) FIFTH Fighter Command.

Brigadier General Wurtsmith,  
Paul B., (AC) USA

- 8th Fighter Group (52 P-38)
- 35th Fighter Group (65 P-47)
- 49th Fighter Group (69 P-38)
- 58th Fighter Group (73 P-47)
- 348th Fighter Group (104 P-47)
- 475th Fighter Group (68 P-38)
- 418th Night Fighter Squadron (11 P-61)
- 421st Night Fighter Squadron (12 P-61)
- 547th Night Fighter Squadron (12 P-61)

(b) FIFTH Bomber Command.

Brigadier General Crabb, James  
V., (AC) USA

- 3rd, 312th, 417th Light Bomb Groups (210 A20)
- 38th, 345th Medium Bomb Groups (113 B-25)
- 22nd, 43rd, 90th, 380th Heavy Bomb Groups (164 B-24)

(c) FIFTY-FOURTH Troop Carrier Wing.

Brigadier General Carter, Warren  
R., (AC) USA

- 317th, 374th, 375th, 433rd Troop Carrier Groups (271 C-47)

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\* Data regarding the organization, disposition and strength of Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, was obtained from the following sources:

- (1) Air Evaluation Board, Leyte Campaign, June 1945.
- (2) Allied Air Forces SOWESPAC Operations Report No. 23, October 14th-25th, 1944.
- (3) Letter from Director, Historical Division, USAF Air University Library, to President, Naval War College, February 25th, 1951.
- (4) Letter from the Research Studies Institute, USAF Air University, to President, Naval War College, November 3rd, 1952.
- (5) THIRTEENTH USAAF Letter of Instructions No. 2, October 6th, 1944.
- (6) Allied Air Forces, SOWESPAC, Operations Instructions No. 71, September 24th, 1944.
- (7) War Diary, Commander Aircraft Northern Solomons (CTG 70.9), October 17th, 1944.



(d) NINETY-FIRST Photographic  
Reconnaissance Wing. Colonel Sams, William C.,  
(AC) USA

6th Photographic Group (61 F-5, F-7)  
71st Reconnaissance Group (16 B-25, 43 P-40, 12 L-5)

(2) THIRTEENTH Air Force (Supporting Force)  
Maj. General Streett, St. Clair,  
(AC) USA

(a) THIRTEENTH Fighter Command. Brigadier General Barnes, Earl  
W., (AC) USA

18th, 347th Fighter Groups (121 P-38)  
419th Night Fighter Squadron (11 P-51)

(b) THIRTEENTH Bomber Command. Brigadier General Matheny,  
William A., (AC) USA

42nd Medium Bomb Group (83 B-25)  
5th, 307th Heavy Bomb Groups (78 B-24)  
868th Heavy Bomb Squadron (11 LAB-24)

(c) Troop Carrier Group. Colonel Sands, Harry T., Jr.,  
(AC) USA

403rd Troop Carrier Group (48 C-47)

(b) TG 70.9 Aircraft Northern Solomons. Maj. General Mitchell, Ralph  
J., USMC

(1) FIRST Marine Aircraft Wing. Maj. General Mitchell, Ralph  
J., USMC

Air Group 12 Colonel Willis, William A., USMC

VMF 115, 211, 218, 313 (62 F4U, 19 FG)  
VMSB 142, 243 (41 SBD)

Air Group 14 Lt. Colonel Hopkins, Zebulon C.,  
USMC

VMF 212, 222, 223 (63 F4U)  
VMSB 244 (21 SBD)  
VMO 251 (21 F4U)





- (a) TU 38.1.1 (Carrier Unit)
- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                   | Vice Admiral McCain, John S.  |
| CARDIV 5 less BATAAN              |                               |
| WASP (FFF)                        | Captain Weller, Oscar A.      |
| (CVG 14 - 53 VF,<br>25 VB, 18 VT) | Commander Blicht, John D.     |
| HORNET (F)                        | Rear Admiral Clark, Joseph J. |
|                                   | Captain Doyle, Austin K.      |
| (CVG 11 - 54 VF,<br>24 VB, 18 VT) | Commander Schrader, Fred R.   |
| MONTEREY                          | Captain Ingersoll, Stuart H.  |
| (CVLG 28 - 24 VF,<br>9 VT)        | Lt. Commander Mehle, Roger W. |
- (b) TU 38.1.2 (Support Unit)
- |                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                          | Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.  |
| CRUDIV 5                 | Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.  |
| CHESTER (FF),            | Captain Hartley, Henry        |
| PENSACOLA,               | Captain Mullinnix, Allen P.   |
| SALT LAKE CITY,          | Captain Busbey, Leroy W., Jr. |
| CRUDIV 11 less SAN JUAN, |                               |
| FLINT, RENO, TUCSON.     | Captain Mullan, William E.A.  |
| SAN DIEGO,               | Captain Mullan, William E.A.  |
| OAKLAND.                 | Captain Reed, Kendall S.      |
- (c) TU 38.1.3 (Screen Unit)
- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
|   | Captain Espe, Carl F.      |
| MARSHALL  |                            |
| DESRON 4  | Captain Smith, Harold P.   |
| CASSIN, DOWNES (from DESDIV 8)                      |                            |
| DESDIV 7  | Captain Smith, Harold P.   |
| DUNLAP (FF), FANNING,<br>CASE, CUMMINGS             |                            |
| DESRON 12 less DESDIV 24                            | Captain Buford, William P. |
| DESDIV 23 less FARENHOLT, LANSDOWNE,<br>LARDNER     | Captain Buford, William P. |
| McCALLA (FF), WOODWORTH                             |                            |
| DESRON 46 less DESDIV 92 except                     |                            |
| BROWN   | Captain Espe, Carl F.      |
| DESDIV 91 less CHARRETTE, BELL, BURNS<br>plus BROWN | Captain Espe, Carl F.      |
| IZARD (FF), CONNER, BROWN                           |                            |
- (2) TG 38.2
- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                   | Rear Admiral Bogan, Gerald F. |
| (a) TU 38.2.1 (Carrier Unit)      | Rear Admiral Bogan, Gerald F. |
| CARDIV 5 less CABOT plus HANCOCK  |                               |
| INTREPID (FFF)                    | Captain Bolger, Joseph F.     |
| (CVG 18 - 54 VF,<br>24 VB, 18 VT) | Commander Coleman, Wilson M.  |

BUNKER HILL (CVG 8 - 54 VF, 24 VB, 18 VT)	Captain Greer, Marshall R.
HANCOCK (CVG 7 - 54 VF, 24 VB, 18 VT)	Commander Shifley, Ralph L. Captain Dickey, Fred C.
INDEPENDENCE (CVLGN 41 - 15 VF(N), 7 VT(N)).	Commander Lamade, John D. Captain Ewen, Edward C. Commander Caldwell, Turner F., Jr.
(b) TU 38.2.2 (Support Unit)	
BATDIV 7 IOWA (FF), NEW JERSEY (FFFFF)	Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C. Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C. Captain McCann, Allan R. Admiral Halsey, William F. Captain Holden, Carl F.
CRUDIV 14 less VICKSBURG, HOUSTON. VINCENNES (F), MIAMI.	Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E.M. Captain Brown, Allen D. Captain Crawford, John G.
(c) TU 38.2.3 (Screen Unit)	
DESRON 52 DESDIV 103 less OWEN, TINGEY (FF). DESDIV 104 less MARSHALL. HICKOX (F), HUNT, LEWIS HANCOCK	Captain Womble, John P., Jr. Commander Minor, J.O. Captain Kenney, William T.
DESRON 53 DESDIV 105 HALSEY POWELL (F), CUSHING, COLAHAN, UHLMANN, BENHAM DESDIV 106 YARNALL (FF), TWINING, STOCKHAM, WEDDERBURN.	Captain Jarrett, Harry B. Captain Jarrett, Harry B. Captain Tompkins, Benjamin F.
(3) TG 38.3	Vice Admiral Sherman, Frederick C.
(a) TU 38.3.1 (Carrier Unit)	
CARDIV 1 less ENTERPRISE, COWPENS plus LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, LANGLEY.	Vice Admiral Sherman, Frederick C.



ESSEX (FFF) (CVG 15 - 53 VF, 24 VB, 16 VT) LEXINGTON (FFFF)	Captain Wieber, Carlos W. Commander McCampbell, David Vice Admiral Mitscher, Marc A. Captain Litch, Ernest W.
(CVG 19 - 40 VF, 30 VB, 18 VT) PRINCETON (CVLG 27 - 23 VF, 9 VT) LANGLEY (CVLG 44 - 24 VF, 9 VT).	Commander Winters, Theodore H. Captain Buracker, William H. Lt. Commander Bardshar, Frederic A. Captain Wegforth, John F. Commander Wordell, Malcolm T.
(b) TU 38.3.2 (Heavy Support Unit)	Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A., Jr.
BATDIV 6 less NORTH CAROLINA. WASHINGTON (FFFF), SOUTH DAKOTA (F). BATDIV 8 less INDIANA MASSACHUSETTS (F), ALABAMA.	Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A., Jr. Captain Cooley, Thomas R. Captain Riggs, Ralph S. Rear Admiral Davis, Glenn B. Captain Warlick, William W. Captain Murphy, Vincent R.
(c) TU 38.3.3 (Light Support Unit) RENO	Captain Alexander, Ralph C. Captain Alexander, Ralph C.
(d) TU 38.3.4 (Screen Unit)	Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.
DESRON 50 less DESDIV 100 DESDIV 99 CLARENCE K. BRONSON (FF), COTTON, DORTCH, GATLING, HEALY.	Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R. Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.
DESRON 55 DESDIV 109 PORTERFIELD (FF), CALLAGHAN, CASSIN YOUNG, IRWIN, PRESTON.	Captain Jarrell, Albert E. Captain Jarrell, Albert E.
DESDIV 110 less PRITCHETT LAWS (F), LONGSHAW, MORRISON.	Commander Edsall, Warren R.

(4) TG 38.4	Rear Admiral Davison, Ralph E.
(a) TU 38.4.1 (Carrier Unit)	Rear Admiral Davison, Ralph E.
CARDIV 2 less HANCOCK	
FRANKLIN (FFF) (CVG 13 - 37 VF, 28 VB, 18 VT)	Captain Shoemaker, James M.
SAN JACINTO (CVLG 51 - 23 VF, 9 VT)	Commander Kibbe, Richard L. Captain Martin, Harold M. Commander Moore, Charles L., Jr.
TU 38.4.11	Rear Admiral Sallada, Harold B.
ENTERPRISE (F) (CVG 20 - 53 VF, 22 VB, 18 VT)	Captain Glover, Cato D., Jr.
BELLEAU WOOD (CVLG 21 - 24 VF, 10 VT)	Commander Smith, Daniel F., Jr. Captain Perry, John Commander Casey, Vincent F.
(b) TU 38.4.2 (Light Support Unit)	Captain McGurl, Daniel M.
BILOXI (FF) NEW ORLEANS	Captain McGurl, Daniel M. Captain Hurff, Jack E.
(c) TU 38.4.3 (Screen Unit)	Captain Long, Victor D.
DESRON 6	Captain Long, Victor D.
DESDIV 11 less CRAVEN	Captain Long, Victor D.
MAURY (FF), GRIDLEY, HELM, McCALL*	
DESDIV 12	Captain Poehlman, Karl F.
MUGFORD (F), RALPH TALBOT, PATTERSON, BAGLEY	
DESDIV 24 less GRAYSON	Captain Greenacre, Alvord J.
WILKES, NICHOLSON, SWANSON (F)	

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\* Temporarily with TU 30.8.5



- (5) TF 34\* (Heavy Surface Striking Force). Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A., Jr.
- (a) TG 34.1 (Battle Line). Vice Admiral Lee, Willis A., Jr.
  - (1) TU 34.1.1  
BATDIV 7. Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.  
IOWA (FF),  
NEW JERSEY (FFFFF).
  - (2) TU 34.1.2  
BATDIV 8. Rear Admiral Davis, Glenn B.  
MASSACHUSETTS (F),  
WASHINGTON (FFFF).
  - (3) TU 34.1.3  
BATDIV 9. Rear Admiral Hanson, Edward W.  
SOUTH DAKOTA (F),  
ALABAMA.
- (b) TG 34.2 (Right Flank). Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E.M.
  - (1) TU 34.2.1
  - (2) TU 34.2.2  
CRUDIV 14 less  
VICKSBURG, HOUSTON plus  
MIAMI, BILOXI. Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis E.M.  
VINCENNES (FF), MIAMI,  
BILOXI.
  - (3) TU 34.2.3  
DESDIV 99. Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.  
CLARENCE K. BRONSON (F), COTTEN,  
DORTCH, GATLING, HEALY.
  - (4) TU 34.2.4 DESDIV  
104 less MARSHALL Captain Kenny, William T.  
HICKOX (F), HUNT, LEWIS HANCOCK.

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\* Since TG's 34 and 34.5 were made effective October 25th, the tentative task organization for these groups as issued by Commander Battleships Pacific Fleet in COMBATPAC Operation Order No. 13-44 Addendum No. 1, Serial 00080, October 16th, 1944, is herewith included. The actual organization made effective October 25th differed somewhat from the above organization.

(c) TG 34.3 (Center).

(d) TG 34.4 (Left Flank). Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.

(1) TU 34.4.1

CRUDIV 5 Rear Admiral Smith, Allan E.  
CHESTER (FF),  
PENSACOLA, SALT LAKE CITY.

(2) TU 34.4.2

(3) TU 34.4.3

DESDIV 91 less  
CHARETTE, BELL, BURNS plus  
PRESTON, UHLMANN Captain Espe, Carl F.  
IZARD (F), CONNER, PRESTON, UHLMANN.

(e) TG 34.9 (Supporting  
Carrier Group).

(1) TU 34.9.1

Carrier Unit ONE  
1 CVL  
PATTERSON, BAGLEY. Commander Shea, William H., Jr.

(2) TU 34.9.2 Carrier Unit TWO

1 CVL  
DESDIV 12 less PATTERSON,  
BAGLEY. Captain Poehlman, Karl F.  
MUGFORD (F), RALPH TALBOT.

(6) TG 34.5\* (Special Group) Rear Admiral Badger, Oscar C.

(1) TU 34.1.1 BATDIV 7

IOWA (FF), NEW JERSEY (FFFFF).

(2) TU 34.2.2 CRUDIV 14

less VICKSBURG, HOUSTON  
plus MIAMI, BILOXI Rear Admiral Whiting, Francis, E.M.  
VINCENNES (F),  
MIAMI, BILOXI.

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\* Since TG's 34 and 34.5 were made effective October 25th, the tentative task organization for these groups as issued by Commander Battleships Pacific Fleet in COMBATPAC Operation Order No. 13-44 Addendum No. 1, Serial 00080, October 16th, 1944, is herewith included. The actual organization made effective October 25th differed somewhat from the above organization.



- (3) TU 34.2.3                      Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.  
 DESDIV 99.                          Captain Wilkinson, Edwin R.  
 CLARENCE K. BRONSON (F),  
 COTTEN, DORTCH, GATLING,  
 HEALY.
- (4) TU 34.9.2 Carrier Unit TWO  
 1 CVL  
 DESDIV 12 less  
     PATTERSON, BAGLEY. Captain Poehlman, Karl F.  
     MUGFORD (F), RALPH TALBOT.
- (b) TG 30.3                          Rear Admiral DuBose, Laurence T.  
 TU 30.3.1 (Towing Unit).        Rear Admiral DuBose, Laurence T.
- HOUSTON (PAWNEE towing)        Captain Behrens, William W.  
     CANBERRA (MUNSEE towing)      Captain Early, Alexander R.  
     CRUDIV 13 less BILOXI.        Rear Admiral DuBose, Laurence T.  
         SANTA FE (FF)  
         BIRMINGHAM,  
         MOBILE  
     BOYD (F), COWELL,  
     GRAYSON, THE SULLIVANS,  
     STEPHAN POTTER                  Captain Sweetser, Willard M.  
     DESDIV 100 less KNAPP         Captain Miller, Wallace J.  
         COGSWELL (F), CAPERTON,  
         INGERSOLL.
- TU 30.3.2 (Air Support Unit).    Rear Admiral Wiltse, Lloyd J.
- BOSTON (F)                        Rear Admiral Wiltse, Lloyd J.  
   Captain Herrmann, Ernest E.  
     WICHITA (F)                      Rear Admiral Joy, Charles T.  
   Captain Spencer, Douglas A.  
   Captain Michael, Stanley J.  
     CABOT                             Lt. Commander Eder, Willard E.  
     (CVLG 29-23VF, 9 VT)            Captain Taylor, Herbert W., Jr.  
     COWPENS                          Lt. Commander Jenkins, Thomas H., USNR  
     (CVLG 22-23VF, 9 VT)
- BURNS (F), BELL, CHARRETTE,  
     MILLER, KNAPP.                  Commander Bullen, Jacob T., Jr.
- (c) TG 30.5 (Air Search and  
 Reconnaissance)                    Commodore Ketcham, Dixwell
- (1) TU 30.5.1 Seaplane  
 Squadrons and Tenders,  
 Kossol Passage.                    Captain Goodney, Willard K.
- CHANDELEUR, POCOMOKE,  
     MAKINAC, YAKUTAT.  
     VPB-16 (13 PBM)                  Lt. Commander Scarpino, William J.  
     VPB-202 (14 PBM)                Commander Leeman, Robert W.  
     VPB-216 (14 PBM)                Commander Cook, Harry E., Jr.  
     VH-1 Detachment (5 PBM).

- (2) TU 30.5.2 Seaplane  
Squadrons and Tenders,  
Saipan. Commander Lyons, Raymond R.  
KENNETH WHITING  
COOS BAY  
SHELIKOF  
VPB-4(16 PB2Y) Lt. Commander Curtis, Frederick L.  
VPB-18 (12 PBM) Lt. Commander Brower, C.M., USNR  
VH-1 Detachment (5 PBM).
- (3) TU 30.5.3 Land-Plane  
Search Group,  
Tinian. Commander Rigsbee, Everett O.  
VPB-102(15 PB4Y) Lt. Commander Pearson, G.R., USNR  
VPB-116(15 PB4Y) Commander Gunz, Donald G.  
VPB-117(15 PB4Y) Commander Rigsbee, Everett O.  
VPB-150(16 PV) Commander Riddell, Robert S.  
VPB-151(15 PV) Commander Masterson, Paul
- (4) TU 30.5.4 Seaplane  
and Tender Detachment,  
Ulithi. Captain McLean, Gordon A.  
HAMLIN (FF)  
CASCO  
ONSLow  
VPB-17(13 PBM) Lt. Commander Kuehner, Kenneth A,  
USNR
- (2) TF 59 Shore-Based Aircraft,  
Forward Area,  
Central Pacific Major General Hale, Willis H. (AC),  
USA
- (1) TG 59.1 Marianas Air Defense  
Command Brigadier General Cushman, Thomas  
J., USMC
- Army  
318th Fighter Group (82 VF)  
Detachment 6th Night Fighter Squadron (6 VF(N))  
Detachment 28th Photographic  
Reconnaissance Squadron (4 F5B)
- Marine  
VMF 216, 217, 225, 321 (82 VF)  
VMF(N) 534 (14 VF(N))  
VMTB 131, 242 (40 VTB)  
VMO 1, 2 (20 VO)



- (2) TG 59.2 Bomber Command. Brigadier General Landon, Truman H.  
(AC) USA

Army

30th, 494th Bomber Groups (109 VBH)

- (3) TG 59.5 Transport Air Group. Colonel McQuade, Thomas J., USMC

Marine

VMR 253 (16 VR)

- (4) TG 59.6 Garrison Force,  
Western Carolines. Major General Moore, James T., USMC

- (a) TU 59.6.2 Air Defense Command,  
Palaus. Colonel Bailey, Caleb T., USMC

Army

Detachment 28th Photographic  
Reconnaissance Squadron (3 F5B)

Marine

VMF 114, 122 (42 VF)  
VMF(N) 541 (13 VF(N))  
VMTB 134 (24 VTB)

- (b) TF 17 Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet. Vice Admiral Lockwood, Charles A.,  
Jr.

- (1) TG 17.1 Empire Patrol Group.

- (a) On Patrol, Single Submarines.

SAILFISH, PARCHE, BURRFISH, BARBEL, STERLET,  
SAURY, SKATE, SEA DOG, TAMBOR, TILEFISH,  
GREENLING, APOGON, SNOOK, SNAPPER, SEA FOX,  
BILLFISH, COBIA.

- (b) On Patrol, Coordinated Attack Groups.

- (1) TG 17.11 Commander Blakely, Edward N.

SHARK, SEADRAGON, BLACKFISH.

- (2) TG 17.14 Commander Millican, William J.

ESCOLAR,\* PERCH, CROAKER.

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\* Lost about October 17th.





308th Heavy Bomb Group (28 B-24, 20 LAB-24)  
341st Medium Bomb Group (23 B-25)  
51st Fighter Group (55 P-40, 19 P-51)  
23rd Fighter Group (47 P-40, 25 P-51)

(b) TWENTIETH Bomber Command

Major General LeMay, Curtis E.,  
(AC) USA

FIFTY-EIGHTH Bomb Wing\*

40th Bomb Group (35 B-29)

Colonel Blanchard, William H.,  
(AC) USA

444th Bomb Group (35 B-29)

Colonel Harvey, Alva L., (AC)  
USA

462nd Bomb Group (34 B-29)

Colonel Kalberer, Alfred F.,  
(AC) USA

468th Bomb Group (36 B-29)

Colonel Faulkner, Ted S., (AC)  
USA

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\* Headquarters discontinued October 12th, 1944.

APPENDIX IIORGANIZATION OF COMBINED FLEET0719 OCTOBER 17THBATTLE FOR LEYTE GULF

COMMANDER IN CHIEF COMBINED FLEET	Admiral Toyoda, Soemu
(a) MOBILE FORCE	Vice Admiral Ozawa, Jisaburo
(1) Mobile Force Main Force	Vice Admiral Ozawa, Jisaburo
CARDIV 1	
CV's AMAGI, UNRYU, KATSURAGI	
Air Group 601	
CARDIV 3	Vice Admiral Ozawa, Jisaburo
CV ZUIKAKU (FFFF)	
CVL's ZUIHO, CHITOSE, CHIYODA	
Air Group 653, element of.	
CARDIV 4	Rear Admiral Matsuda, Chiaki
BB/XCV HYUGA (F)	
BB/XCV ISE	
XCV JUNYO	
CVL RYUHO	
Air Group 634, element of.	
DESRON 10, elements of.	Captain Amano, Shigetaka
DESDIV 41	Captain Wakida, Kiichiro
SHIMOTSUKI	
DESDIV 61	Captain Amano, Shigetaka
HATSUZUKI (F), AKITSUKI,	
WAKATSUKI	
DESRON 11	Rear Admiral Takama, Tamotsu
CL TAMA (F), DD's SUGI, MOMI,	
KAYA, KASHI, HINOKI	
CL OYODO	
(2) SECOND Striking Force	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide
CRUDIV 21	Vice Admiral Shima, Kiyohide
CA's NACHI (FFF), ASHIGARA	



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DESRON 1 CL ABUKUMA (FF)	Rear Admiral Kimura, Masatomi
DESDIV 7 AKEBONO, USHIC	Commander Iwagami, Tsugichi
DESDIV 18 KASUMI, SHIRANUHI	Rear Admiral Mizui, Seiji
DESDIV 21 WAKABA, HATSUSHIMO, HATSU HARU	Commander Ishii, Hisashi
(3) FIRST Striking Force	Vice Admiral Kurita, Takeo
<u>First Section</u>	Vice Admiral Kurita, Takeo
BATDIV 1 YAMATO (FF), MUSASHI, NAGATO	Vice Admiral Ugaki, Matome
BATDIV 2 YAMASHIRO (F), FUSO	Vice Admiral Nishimura, Shoji
CRUDIV 4 CA's ATAGO (FFF), TAKAO, CHOKAI, MAYA	Vice Admiral Kurita, Takeo
CRUDIV 5 CA's MYOKO (F), HAGURO, MOGAMI	Vice Admiral Hashimoto, Shintaro
CRUDIV 16 CA AOBA, CL KINU, DD URANAMI	Vice Admiral Sakonju, Naomasa
DESRON 2 CL NOSHIRO (F), DD's SHIMAKAZE, SHIGURE	Rear Admiral Hayakawa, Mikio
DESDIV 2 HAYASHIMO, AKISHIMO, KIYOSHIMO	Captain Shiraishi, Nagoyoshi
DESDIV 31 KISHINAMI, NAGANAMI, OKINAMI, ASASHIMO	Captain Fukuoka, Tokujiro
DESDIV 32 HAMANAMI, FUJINAMI	Captain Orita, Tsuneo
<u>Second Section</u>	Vice Admiral Suzuki, Yoshio
BATDIV 3 KONGO (FF), HARUNA	Vice Admiral Suzuki, Yoshio

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CRUDIV 7 Vice Admiral Shiraishi, Kazutaka  
CA's KUMANO (F), SUZUYA, TONE,  
CHIKUMA

DESRON 10 less DESDIV's 41, 61 Rear Admiral Kimura, Susumu  
CL YAHAGI (F)

DESDIV 4 Captain Isogu, Kenma  
MICHISHIO (F), ASAGUMO, YAMAGUMO,  
NOWAKI

DESDIV 17 Captain Tanii, Tamotsu  
URAKAZE, HAMAKAZE, YUKIKAZE, ISOKAZE

Service Force

AO NIPPO MARU, (Escort) MANJU,  
(Escort) MIYAKE

(b) SIXTH BASE AIR FORCE Vice Admiral Fukudome, Shigeru

- (1) Western Attack Force ONE
- (2) Western Attack Force TWO
- (3) Western Attack Force THREE
- (4) Western Attack Force FOUR
- (5) "T" Attack Force

(c) ADVANCE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE Vice Admiral Miwa, Shigeyoshi

FIRST Submarine Force

I-26, I-38, I-41, I-44, I-45, I-46, I-53,  
I-54, I-56, I-177, RO-41, RO-43, RO-46,  
RO-47, RO-49, RO-50, RO-109, RO-112

(d) SOUTHWEST AREA FORCE Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi

(1) Philippines Force Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi

30th Base Force  
954th Air Group  
955th Air Group  
32nd Special Base Force  
Attached Forces 3rd Southern Expeditionary Fleet

(2) THIRD Base Air Force Vice Admiral Mikawa, Gunichi

28th Air Flotilla  
331st Air Group



(3) FIFTH Base Air Force

Vice Admiral Teraoka, Kimpei

23rd Air Flotilla  
26th Air Flotilla  
61st Air Flotilla  
153rd Air Group  
201st Air Group  
761st Air Group  
1021st Air Group

(e) ANTI-SUBMARINE PATROL FORCE

Rear Admiral Edo, Heitaro

Escort Squadron 31

Rear Admiral Edo, Heitaro

CL ISUZU (FF)

DESDIV 30  
AKIKAZE, UZUKI, YUZUKI

DESDIV 43  
MOMO, TAKE, UME, MAKI, KIRI, KUWA

Commander Karma, Ryokichi

Air Group 933

APPENDIX III

J A P A N E S E A I R C R A F T \*

U.S. Code  
Name

Japanese Designation or Name

Type

NAVY:

Carrier-Type Fighter	Type 0 carrier-based fighter	Zeko
Carrier-Type Fighter	Reppu	Sam
Interceptor Fighter	Raiden	Jack
Interceptor Fighter	Shiden	George
Seaplane Fighter	Kyofu	Rex
Carrier-Type Attack	Type 97 carrier-based attack	Kate
Carrier-Type Attack	Tenzan	Jill
Carrier-Type Attack	Ryusei	Grace
Carrier-Type Bomber	Type 99 carrier-based bomber	Val
Carrier-Type Reconnaissance	Suisei	Judy
Carrier-Type Reconnaissance	Saiun	Myrt
Land Reconnaissance (and night VF)	Gekko	Irving
Land Attack	Type 1 land attack	Betty
Two Engine Land Bomber	Ginga	Frances
Two Engine Land Bomber	Type 96	Nell
Observation Seaplane	Type 0 observation seaplane	Pete
Reconnaissance Seaplane	Shiun	Norm
Reconnaissance Seaplane	Zuiun	Paul
Reconnaissance Seaplane	Type 0 reconnaissance seaplane	Jake
Patrol Seaplane	Type 2 flying boat	Emily

Army:

Fighter	Type 1 fighter	Oscar
Fighter	Type 2 fighter	Tojo
Fighter	Type 3 fighter	Tony
Fighter	Ki 84	Frank
Heavy Fighter	Type 2 heavy fighter	Nick
Reconnaissance	Type 99 Military recco or assault	Sonia
Land Reconnaissance	Type 100 Hq. recco	Dinah
Light Bomber	Type 99 light bomber	Lily
Heavy Bomber	Type 97 heavy bomber	Sally
Heavy Bomber	Type 100 heavy bomber	Helen

\* Enclosure to CINCPAC/CINCPAA "Weekly Intelligence," Vol. 1, No. 19, November 17th, 1944.





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Unclassified

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